

A Summer
in the
Kingdom of Greece,
1962

Elizabeth Wayland Barber



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Preface

This book is almost entirely a transcript of a 40,000-word journal the author kept while spending the summer in Greece in 1962, traveling alone on public transportation. The purpose of the journal was to give her polyglot and well-traveled family a fine-grained account of her adventures and observations (groups of onionskin pages were mailed home when possible), while the purpose of the trip was to visit archaeological sites—especially Bronze Age ones—and to learn Modern Greek by immersion. Using Athens as home base, the author made four long loops: to the Peloponnese, to the Aegean islands, to Crete, and to northern Greece; so the book is divided and arranged accordingly. Photographing and occasionally sketching along the way, she described her personal encounters and amused herself by peppering her observations with literary parallels, mostly Classical.

The journal includes intimate little vignettes of well-known archaeologists and other scholars the author encountered in her travels, some of whom she had studied with, as well as opinions expressed by these people concerning finds (like the discovery of Çatal Hüyük) that were quite new at the time. Other vignettes concern life as she found it both in towns and out in the countryside. As the country was still a kingdom, almost entirely without paved roads, the account presents a rather different picture from the Greece of today, later ruled by a military junta, then becoming a democracy, and eventually joining the EU.

The first few pages (up to “Horse-Taming Argos”) were mostly written recently (2013), to serve as introduction to the journal. Some of the very end was also written recently, from postcards and vivid memories, since the author got too ill to finish the journal at the time. The balance was transcribed essentially verbatim. Because her parents did not read Greek but she wanted to preserve the actual Greek for herself, words and phrases often appear *in* Greek but followed by transcription and/or translation the first time [some accents unfortunately unavailable on this computer]. She did not translate other languages in the journal because her family did not need it. Translations of these have been added in square brackets.

The author’s family had already heard a great deal about Professors Mabel Lang and Machteld Mellink of Bryn Mawr and Emmett Bennett of the University of Wisconsin, so these people were not explained or introduced in the journal. Names of scholars and classmates have now been filled out at first encounter for easier recognition, but those of the various tourists she met were left in whatever form they had in the journal.

Additional photographs are posted at elizabethwaylandbarber.com.

Introduction

Πλάτανος *Plátanos* (literally “plane tree”)

Half a century ago, halfway up the steep north slope of Mt. Orno in East Crete, there grew a gigantic plane tree. Its low-spreading branches lent support to a thick grapevine, while its roots had scrunched their toe-tips deep into the rocks to soak up water, some of which gushed from the cliff face on the up-side of the narrow dirt road. Two busses stood in its shade, facing opposite directions, while the passengers stretched their legs, filled bottles at the spring, and bought souvlaki from the owner of a little stand, who had the fire ready and the skewers on in plenty of time for the arrival of the busses. His donkey, tethered to the tree, gazed out over the deep blue Aegean Sea 500 feet below, where the isle of Pseira rode at anchor in the distance [**Ph 1**].



It wasn't the usual bus stop; nobody lived here. It was merely the only place across the entire face of the mountain where the road was wide enough for two busses to pass: the one going east from Iraklion to Siteia and the one going west from Siteia to Iraklion. This was an eight-hour trip, for the bumpy roads brooked no modern speeds and the busses halted at every village along the way—and anywhere else deemed useful.

(A bit earlier we had stopped in the middle of nowhere and everyone jumped out. "What has happened?" I asked in my best Greek. "Nothing—come along! Tomorrow is the saint's day of the saint whose shrine this is!" People were running back and forth from a large cave-like shrine in the rock, crossing themselves, lighting candles, and mouthing prayers.)

The spring still gushes water, but the magnificent plane tree is no longer. The widening of the road to two full, paved lanes must have sacrificed it; one can now drive a car from Iraklion to Siteia in a couple of hours or less, if no one has had an accident from driving it too fast. In place of the little souvlaki stand, a permanent café sprawls precariously along the downhill-side of the road, with little blue umbrellas trying to replace the deep shade of the plane tree.

¶

‘η σχολή
school (literally “leisure”)

As I was finishing college in 1962, I decided to spend the summer in Greece. I had worked hard to pull off a double major in archaeology and Greek at Bryn Mawr, and I wasn't sure I'd be allowed time to take more Greek in grad school (where I was to concentrate on Near Eastern archaeology). In particular, I didn't want to lose all that effort to learn two fields I loved, Greek language and Greek archaeology. So, I reasoned, if I spend the summer in Greece I can cement my ancient Greek by learning to speak Modern Greek, and I can see all those archaeological sites I had studied—nay, drawn plan by plan onto 3x5 cards and memorized. Several of my classmates were applying to the summer session of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, so I read through the prospectus.

And that's where things changed. I had fallen in love with archaeology when I was 12 and set my cap for Minoans and Mycenaeans when I learned of Ventris's decipherment of Linear B in 1956—I was then a junior in high school. But the American School's schedule showed that with them I would get a mere 2 days in Crete out of the whole summer. That was intolerable. And almost no Bronze Age sites on the mainland, either.

Furthermore, it occurred to me, I would be with Americans all summer, not spending my time with Greeks speaking Greek. So I determined to go on my own, with a phrase book, pocket dictionary, and my 3x5 site-plans in hand.

Frankly, I was terrified: I had never been “out on my own” before. But I wanted *so* badly to immerse myself in the glory of Greece that I did it anyway. I kept a journal much of the time, recording my adventures and thoughts in tiny script on sheets of onionskin, which I would tear from their pad and mail to my (equally terrified, because very protective) parents at intervals when I had access to a post office. My mother saved every scrap, and the occasional picture postcards too.

Some 40 years later, as I was eating dinner with archaeologists at Palaikastro in East Crete, I mentioned how different Greece was in 1962. Learning of my journal, they urged me to publish it, claiming that people would be interested in my descriptions of a Greece that was still a kingdom and still a country with no paved roads beyond Athens-to-Eleusis. At the time I found that hard to believe; but now that a full half century has passed and Greece has changed radically yet again as a result of the EU, I agree that much of that observant narrative is worth plucking out and preserving.



I. Athens and the Peloponnese.

κόρη 'εϋπλοκαμίς “fair-tressed girl”

Mid-June. Mabel Lang [Prof. of Greek, Bryn Mawr College] suggested I stay at the Xenias Melathron on Boukharestiou St. while in Athens. This small family-style hotel sat right in the heart of the city, on a steep little side-street a few blocks west of Syntagma Square. Many years later this street had become pedestrian-only, full of expensive little boutiques but no hotel. But back then it was full of little cars parked helter-skelter and half on the sidewalk, leaving barely room for a vehicle to navigate the street and almost none for a pedestrian to descend on the sidewalk. At the bottom left corner was a jewelry shop. One of its little windows perpetually displayed a handcrafted gold reproduction of the Minoan pendant from Mallia of two wasps grasping a granulated gold ball of pollen, which I stopped to admire longingly every time I passed. [Sk 1]



Around the corner to the right was a small bank, one of the few with a teller who spoke English (in a kiosk at the very back), where I could cash and convert my traveler's checks. Not many people in Athens spoke English at that time. The minute an obvious foreigner like me walked in, everyone unanimously and vigorously pointed back to the man who spoke some English. (During an early visit I inquired what the Greek term for “traveler's check” was. It was a mouthful, and I had to practice it a lot till I could say it.) Across the road and down a bit was a famous sweet-shop, where I often saw another obvious foreigner, a girl about my age with light brown hair plaited into a thick braid so long that it barely missed brushing the ground. (My braid was scarcely to my waist.) To this day I wonder who she was. To admire her a little longer, I would sidle in and buy a tiny bag of *loukoúmi*, Turkish delight, but I never really liked the stuff. The candy was kind of tough and flavors like rosewater seemed peculiar. (It wasn't until 2008, when a Macedonian village woman in Aghia Eleni offered me some loukoumi she had just made, that I suddenly understood why people rave about it: hers was delicious and oh so tender.)

Nearby in Syntagma Square one could stand with the other tourists and watch the magnificent Evzones strut through the changing of the Palace Guard—for it was still a palace then, home of King Paul, next to last king of Greece. This was three years before the junta and eleven before the end of the monarchy. One can still watch the changing of the Evzones today, but what they guard is now the Parliament. It's easier to watch now, too, because Syntagma is largely closed off from cars, whereas then it was a madhouse of honking traffic.

If you followed the street kitty-corner across Syntagma from “my” corner, threading your way south and a little east, you passed many elderly ladies sitting on chairs on the sidewalks, where the light was good, embroidering white linens in traditional blue cross-stitch. I got the feeling they sold at least as much to local women for their households as to tourists. Eventually, if you didn’t lose your way, the lanes funneled into narrow little Pandrósou Street, unsettling home of all manner of tin- and coppersmiths, junk-sellers of many descriptions, and tailors who would make you an Amália costume—the costume of the first queen of Greece, who was from the Peloponnese, and which she catapulted to the status of national dress.

Beyond Pandrosou, beyond the noisy metro station—I always walked because I hadn’t a clue how to take the metro—one came eventually to the Athenian Agora, the ancient marketplace, so jammed in among tiny houses cantilevered over both sides of the metro rails that you had to look sharp to find the entrance. Someone had told me that the Painted Market, the *Stoa Poikile*, famous in ancient times for its paintings of battles both mythical and historical, was probably under that warren of houses; so I looked on them with some awe. (Those houses too have disappeared: the Stoa Poikile was indeed beneath them and is being excavated, but the paintings are long gone.)

Once into the Agora, however, untempted by the newly rebuilt Stoa of Attalos, I had to push on, up up up the little paths to the fabled Acropolis. “My sense of proportion is all off,” I wrote. “The Parthenon looks bigger on the outside and smaller on the inside than I thought. The Erechtheum looked the ‘right size’ until I actually got up to it, and then it seemed small; and one of my favorite statues, which I always thought was life-size, turned out to be scarcely 2 feet tall! It is really amazing how different 3-D is from 2-D.” But that’s why I came here. The large asphalt plaza full of tourist buses was a thing of the future: there might be two or three buses at most waiting below the great steps. And most of the tourists were Greeks. I especially recall the noisy young women in summer dresses and short curls, wobbling their way across the uneven stones of the terraces and temples—yes, anyone could

walk right over and through the Parthenon—in white spike-heeled *sandals*, often leaning on their companions for support as they tripped about, but otherwise quite oblivious of the constant danger of a sprained ankle. Fashion prevailed over either safety or comfort.

My favorite spot was the exquisite little Nike Temple. And I always stooped at the corners of the Parthenon to admire the subtle curvature of its platform, gently bowed up in the center to make it *appear* straight and not sagging, with the corner columns curving inward a bit extra so as not to *appear* to be falling outward. On the way back through the Agora, I always stopped to admire the Theseum, a perfect little Doric temple that had been moved up onto a side-slope. [Ph 2]



The people at the hotel were very kind to me: a girl traveling alone was an anomaly to most Greeks in those days, as I came to learn. In particular, the young woman who cleaned the rooms befriended me. She had grown up in a village and spoke only Greek, while my Greek was very poor at first—so poor that it took me a week to get up the courage to try to order a meal in a restaurant. (Hunger drove me to it: I had been living

mostly on bread.) But we managed, with good doses of hand-signs thrown in. Rooms did not have private baths and toilets in those days. The toilet was in a little closet at the end of the hall, with a pull-chain attached to a tank way up at the ceiling to flush it. To my pampered American senses, it seemed slightly smelly, but I had much to learn. The bathtub occupied a separate room, and you could make arrangements with the concierge to use it. I was accustomed to European travel, making do with spit-baths for a while, then indulging in “comprehensive bath”—body, hair, and clothes—when circumstances permitted.

In order to keep my baggage to a minimum, I had a longish, tent-shaped light blue coat that doubled as bathrobe. One morning, as I emerged from the bathing chamber in this coat, headed for my room down the hall with my sopping wet hair turbaned in my towel and my soap and shampoo in my hand, the chambermaid took one look and screamed. I stopped in dismay. Then she saw it was me. “O po po po!!” she said, leaning against the wall half in a faint and fanning herself. “It’s you, Miss! I thought you were a Turk!”

Turks, it seems, were still the village boogey-men, used to scare the kids.

¶

’ανένενε καρήσατι διος Ἀχιλλεύς. —Iliad 22.205

“Divine Achilles nodded up with his head.”

After the Acropolis, my second most important quarry was the National Museum, to see all those objects I had studied so hard in classes. But that was far enough away that, if I was to have enough leg-power for the museum, I was going to have to get at least most of the way there by city bus. I spent quite a bit of time trying to decipher what the signs on the nearby bus stop meant. The street from Syntagma that went past the jewelry shop and bank was one way the right direction, so finally, when one of the buses stopped and people were getting off and on, I asked the conductor in my broken Greek if this bus went past the National Museum. Standing above me in the wide rear doorway of the bus, he motioned with his head up and back towards the interior of the bus. So I climbed on, handing him what I had earlier learned was the price of a local ride. He looked a bit startled but went on with his business. I sat down and counted the streets off on my map. But when we got to Omonía Square (the other big central square in Athens besides Syntagma), instead of turning right toward the museum, the bus turned left and headed off to God knows where. Clearly I was on the

wrong bus. So I hastily jumped off at the next stop and walked back the rest of the way to the museum, wondering what the heck had happened. It was only later, as I learned Greek ways better, that I came to understand that nodding *down* means yes, but nodding *up*—usually with a momentary closing of the eyes and a click of the tongue—means no. I should have known: Zeus and Achilles use the same motions in Homer: nod down to acquiesce, nod up to refuse. Nodding up and down for yes or shaking side to side for no only confuses a Greek.

The National Museum is overwhelming, there is so much stuff. A good five millennia of stuff, to be more exact. Fortunately for me, the huge room directly ahead of you as you enter is the prehistoric hall, filled principally with Mycenaean and Cycladic Bronze Age stuff. Even a cursory look at that took me hours. The Greek sculpture is in a long skinny gallery wrapped clockwise all the way around the prehistoric hall, starting with Archaic (early Iron Age) materials and the kouroi (“young men”) with their well-chiseled epigastric arches. Dramatically appearing as you round a partition is the bronze Zeus-or-Poseidon hauled out of the sea at Artemision. Again I was hit with the “wrong-size” stick. It is so small! “Life size” yes, but life size for people who were tall if they achieved my height, and I’m only 5’5”. But it makes up for it in the splendor of the stance and the naturally commanding look of the bearded face.

By that time my feet were worn to nubs and I left the rest of the treasures for future visits.



Horse-taming Argos

Late June. Jean [Porter, a Bryn Mawr classmate,] and I left Athens for Nauplion Tuesday afternoon by bus, carrying a small bag, a purse, and a camera each; we had no hotel reservation. The bus ride was a lovely three and a half hours, through Eleusis, Corinth (the famed canal looks like no more than a big ditch from the bridge), and Argos, then past Tiryns (the ancient citadel on its low outcrop looks so small), to the port of Nauplion. The road was dirt from Eleusis on, and the bus driver played Greek folk music at top volume the whole way—par for the course, as I soon learned.

Stepping off the bus at Nauplion, we were immediately accosted: Would we like to stay at the Youth Hostel? Now, neither of us had a Youth Hostel card; but the place had opened only two months earlier and was apparently struggling for customers. We decided that, since we could carry our stuff ourselves, we could always walk out if we didn’t trust the place. So we followed their scout. It was clean, in fact bare, and inexpensive, and

we could rent a sheet and blanket, so we stayed. The only hitch was, the taps ran nothing but cold *salt* water, and we had no salt-water soap.

Presently we heard a strange commotion outside, which turned out to be a vendor selling fresh water from a tank that he was wheeling through the streets. Apparently lots of other people had only salt-water taps, and they were flocking to him with containers to be filled for a small price. Just what we needed—but containers?? Fortunately Jean had an empty liter bottle. One liter. We saved the water for when we came home from Berbati the next day. It's amazing how, with some care and prioritizing, two girls can manage to take sponge-baths and wash out their necessaries with a single liter of water when they have to. We felt absolutely delighted with our lovely baths—they would have seemed dreadful under any other conditions, I'm sure. But on to Berbati.

We had only a few days in which to "do" Mycenae, Tiryns, Lerna, Berbati (which Jean had written her senior thesis about), all in the Argolid, and then Olympia, before she had to be back at the American School. We put Berbati first because it was the least known entity and we didn't know how long it would take. In fact, we didn't even know quite where it was—the only maps we could find were terrible: rather crude maps for school children.

Berbati

Berbati is actually a village on the northeast side of the Argive plain, about a half hour from Argos by auto or bus. A site nearby, excavated by the Swedes in 1939 and 1957, but not published, had produced the only known Mycenaean pottery kiln, intact and even with pots inside. It's very important to the study of Mycenaean pottery, but since it's unpublished no one knows much about it except the Swedes. So Jean wanted to try to find it and photograph it, in the interests of science. I was game for anything Bronze Age.

When we asked the manager of the hostel how to get there, he told us we could catch a bus from Argos at 6:30 AM, 1:30 PM, or 7:30 PM, or take a taxi for 30 Δρ [drachmas, worth about 3 cents apiece in 1962]. So we decided to take a taxi from Argos to Berbati about 9:00 AM and try to catch the 1:30 bus on its return trip. When we got to Argos, however, the taxi drivers insisted on 100 Δρ; but since that's only about \$3.50 and we were girls alone in strange land, we decided it was worth it to us. So we taxied the half hour to Berbati.

The driver kindly asked around for us until he got us headed onto the right mule track before he returned to Argos. We started off, but had walked only a few hundred feet when we reached a fork in the road at a well. Several locals sitting around near it asked us what we were looking for.

“Excavations,” we said in minimal Greek.

“Mycenae!” they said. (Mycenae was some ten miles away.)

We replied no, no, a potter’s quarters. A woman watering her donkey seemed to know. She said she was going near there and would show us our way, so we followed her. She wanted one of us to ride on her donkey, but we made her get back on. She spun wool as she rode, letting the spindle whirl as she paid out fibers, until it almost reached the ground. Then she’d yank the thread so the spindle traveled up the yarn like a yoyo right into her hand; then another sharp flick to set it twirling again, and down it sank to spin another length of yarn.

She took us what must have been a mile and a half, then pointed out a path to the left while she took the road to the right. We wondered if we weren’t too far from the village for what we were looking for but decided to see what we could find. So we followed the path over a little knoll and suddenly found ourselves overlooking a shepherd cottage with three springs, several horses and donkeys, and about five shepherds all staring at us. Opposite was a steep mound with some low stone walls scattered about amid the live rock. Our target? We had to cross the yard and the streams, however, to reach it, and we had to go through or past the curious shepherds. By the time we had descended our hill, three more shepherds had materialized, as well as a woman and child. So we decided, since something obviously would have to be said, to address the woman and ask her where the *’ανασκαφές* (excavations) were.

[Before I left the USA, another classmate, half Greek, Betsey Anagnostakis, had explained to me that out in the countryside, that is, outside of Athens, the ancient Homeric notion of *ξενία*—xenia, the “host/guest relationship”—was still very much alive. A girl traveling alone was an anomaly: a “good” girl should have male relatives escorting her or be in a big group, so a girl by herself must be a “bad” girl or a very unfortunate one. I would have to shift perceptions of me from “wicked” to “unfortunate” by never addressing a man with my questions, always seeking out instead a woman, preferably an older woman. She would notice that I had avoided the men and would be so horrified that I was alone that she would take me under her wing—that is, accept me as a sacred Guest, with all the protection which that implied. She could then pass me over to male relatives—husband, brother, uncle, son—and it was strictly hands off.]

All this woman could say (roughly translated) was, “Are you two girls *alone*?? Only you? Aren’t there any more of you?” One of the cleaner of the men, however, maybe 25 years old, indicated the way to us and followed at a discreet distance with two pals. All of a sudden Jean spotted a piece of pottery. She picked it up and wiped it off: “Mycenaean!” Late Helladic IIIB, to be exact. Just the period of the kiln. We nodded in triumph at each other. A few steps farther and we began to notice potsherds all over the place, millions of them, almost all Late Helladic, but here and there a sherd of Middle Helladic ware (maybe or maybe not pre-Greek). We had no idea that MH stuff had been found at Berbati—so we began to wonder again where we were. One of the guys—his name, we learned, was George—knew a little English and pointed to a square of walls, saying, “House, house!” We nodded and peered at it. Interest waned in favor of the potsherds again. Pretty soon George pointed to something round—a two-foot-high circle of stones, about 6 feet in diameter, with an opening on one side. “Bake!” he said. Jean and I mentally shook hands: we were indeed at the Berbati kiln. [Ph 3]



We wandered happily for a little while, as the boys watched. Presently George said, “We have food,” pointing to the hut at the bottom of the hill, “and good water!” Jean and I glanced at each other and gulped. We had been warned against drinking water in the Argolid, and we had seen many little boys with shaved heads, a cure for ringworm.

“We aren’t hungry—we just ate,” I ventured. That wouldn’t do, of course. Finally we settled on ‘ύστερα (“later”) and the boys went back to their work down the hill.

We took photographs around the site and Jean drew a few pictures, then we fell to potsherding to find out exactly what sorts of pottery the Swedes had found. Sherding was easy: the ground was so thickly littered with wasters from the kiln that you couldn’t walk without stepping on them. After a couple of hours on that hot east slope, we finally subsided into the shade of an overhanging boulder to cool off before starting the hike back. Instantly a delegation of four of the boys, headed by George, appeared around the corner of the hill. They wanted us to come eat, a prospect we were rather leery of. So we stalled. Um, we had to get back to the village to catch the afternoon bus. Ah, but it didn’t leave Berbati until 3:30. (It was now 1:30.) And it would take only 20 minutes to walk to Berbati from Prosymna.

Prosymna?? Now we were really confused as to our whereabouts. Prosymna was a different Mycenaean site, also in the hinterlands of Mycenae, one which Blegen had dug—but it had graves, and also a Classical temple, the Argive Heraeum. Where was all that?

Somewhere in the halting conversation it turned up that George had worked on the digging of the site we were standing on.

“When?” we asked, since he had obviously been no more than a toddler in 1939. “1957,” he replied. Aha.

Did he know a man named Åke Åkerstrom (director of the Swedish school)?

“Yes! He was director of excavations!”

We were, indeed, at the Berbati kiln.

But that still didn’t settle the lunch question.

Torn between our fears and their apparently kind invitations, we agreed to go down with them to the spring on the smaller hill opposite, to wash up—we *were* rather grubby. The water there was caught almost directly in a little stone channel which ran about four feet before spilling the water a foot into a cubical stone watering trough a foot across, which in turn dribbled the water into a bed that ran another six feet before reaching the bed of the rivulet from the next spring. We washed our hands and faces and started drying off in the air, but the men all started chattering—several more had collected by now. We gradually figured out that they wanted to go fetch glasses, since we seemed not to want to drink and obviously must be thirsty. We were trapped. We decided, however, that we’d rather drink from our hands than from their glasses. So we gave in and drank a little, scooping it

up from the uppermost channel, well above the watering trough used by the livestock, not to mention the stream the sheep were standing in. After we had drunk, they simply stuck their faces in and drank that way. More sanitary, in the end, than using one's hands! We now attempted to make a speedy exit, but George objected that we *couldn't* go without eating—we would insult the cook! "We have *good* cook!" he said proudly. We assured him that we understood the cook was *very* good, but we...

Too late. We were suddenly confronted by two large chunks of meat aboard two large forks, held out directly in our faces by a grizzled and aproned shepherd with a big grin. By this time there were a full dozen men standing in a ring around us, all of them in their twenties or so, except the cook, who was probably pushing 50. Either word had spread of the odd occurrence of our visit, or this was lunchtime for everybody. There was no sign of the woman.

"Ε'ιμαι μάγειρος, μάγειρος, **μάγειρος!**" (I'm the cook, the cook, the cook!) shouted the grizzled one, brandishing the forks at us, his round face grinning proudly. We couldn't help but notice how good it smelled. The forks were shoved into our hands and we discovered the meat was piping hot and liberally doused with salt. We tossed our qualms aside and ate. It was of course *'apví* (lamb somewhere on the way to mutton), and it tasted delicious. We figured we could then make our getaway.

Fat chance. We must come sit down! The host/guest relation had its sacred rules. The entire group now escorted us to the stone flour mill in front of the hut—in full sun, unfortunately. After we were shown the fire just inside the hut with a large pot of boiling meat (whence our forks-full) and yet more meat on skewers, we were seated upon the edge of the grinding trough. We refused the shirts so gallantly offered as covering for the trough and seated ourselves. Then a new enigma.

"Wy?" said George. We looked baffled.

"Wy not?" We were utterly perplexed by this new linguistic enigma.

"Not wy? ...Wy? ...Wy not?" The questions came thick and fast. The discussion turned into Greek and came faster. The word *κρασί* flew by, and I had barely time to tell Jean that the unfathomable *wy* should be fathomed as *wine* when we found ourselves clutching small glasses of pale yellow turpentine.

"Retsina!" said Jean. Fourteen faces lit up.

"‘Ρετσίνα, ‘ρετσίνα, **‘ρετσίνα!**" shouted the cook, gleefully slapping his knee with each word. We decided that wine was safe and gulped it down, though we weren't drinkers. We were so thirsty by then that it actually tasted good—and quite thirst-quenching. It was very cold, almost

icy. We relinquished the forks in favor of the glasses of retsina. Mistake. Soon the cook came prancing out with forks refilled, each of them spearing a large piece of that famous Homeric delicacy, roasted entrails. That was more than Jean and I could face. Oh but we are full, we protested—really, we've had enough!

“Μάγειρος, μάγειρος, μάγειρος!” shouted the cook again, freeing one hand of a fork—by putting it into mine—in order to thump his chest.

(“He is *good* cook,” commented George, “but he is old man.”)

The cook waited until he had the satisfaction of seeing me eating my piece and then pranced off again into the hut. Jean grabbed the chance to convey to George that she didn't like entrails and he ate it for her before the chef returned. Which he did very soon, toting an enormous round loaf of bread and what looked like an eight-inch yatagan.

“Ψωμί, ψωμί, ψωμί!” (Bread, bread, bread!) he shouted. Brandishing the knife, he tucked the loaf under his arm and sawed into it. The crust piece, clearly hard as a rock, he tossed to one of the three boys reclining comfortably on an enormous black woolen cape on the ground; the second piece he gave to us, despite our protestations of fullness. George, meanwhile, had run off. He soon returned with a capacious, roughly two-gallon, green bottle, covered with woven wicker and dripping wet. He had evidently just hauled it out of the third spring. Our glasses were snatched and refilled with icy *pink* retsina. And our forks were snatched to allow us to hold the glasses—and presently returned laden with more boiled meat.

Fortunately, just as the cook bounced out of the hut carrying the pot-lid piled with yet more meat, someone suddenly got the idea that we should take their pictures. We nodded, and immediately they all jumped up and placed themselves in various attitudes for a group picture, some standing in a bunch, others reclining on the great black cape in front so everyone could be seen. As a final touch, our extrovert friend the cook rushed out of the hut with the great knife in the chest-pocket of his shirt, the bread under one arm, and in the other hand an enormous ladle full of meat.

“Μάγειρος, μάγειρος, μάγειρος!” he warbled and plopped himself grinning at one end of the group. Jean took a couple of pictures, promising to send them copies in the fall, and we made a hasty exit up the hill before the *mageiros* had a chance to find the forks again.

We gained the mule-track in a few minutes and shortly found some shade in which to rest and cool off. We were terribly hot by then. Within three minutes we heard the clip-clop of a mule coming and jumped up. It was our friend from before, the woman spinning on mule-back. She soon overtook us, hopped down, and absolutely *insisted* that one of us ride. So

Jean got on (after much arguing) and rode for a ways. When we thought she had ridden for a polite distance, Jean scrambled off and asked the woman to get on. But she wouldn't hear of it and made me ride next.

Although the saddle was made of wood—long wooden slats, in fact—it was much more comfortable than I might have thought. The trouble is that you must ride sidesaddle, and after a bit the sideways joggling was giving me more and more of a pain in the side. So after riding a discreet distance, I got down again. Just then we came in sight of the main road.

And just then we saw the bus to Argos pulling off down the road!

“ ’Εφυγε, ’έφυγε!” (It left! It left!) cried the woman. She demanded to know what time it was; I answered 2:30. She and everyone else had assured us that the bus left at *three*-thirty. Unfortunately, the next one—the only other one—left at 8:30 PM; rather late, especially since we didn't want to try to eat dinner in the village. The woman had been insisting all along that we should come home with her and lie down for a while until the bus left. Now she doubled her insistence. We, however, continued to maintain that we had to get back to Argos, while she led us to the village café for a much-needed *limonada*—a soda much like 7-Up. (The café forms the social center of a village, usually serving only coffee, yogurt, bottled limonada, and in the evening liquor for the men, as near as I can tell. People, mostly men, gather there to talk. It generally does not serve meals.) We took the opportunity of buying a limonada for our acquaintance too, for her efforts on our behalf.

Finally, when Jean produced the little white lie that we had to get back because we had a friend waiting for us, the offers of a napping place ceased in favor of finding the local taxi-driver. (In retrospect, I wish I had been able to see the inside of a local house; but this was our first big adventure and we were exhausted as well as very unsure of ourselves.) The driver, when found, said he'd take us back to Argos for 30 Δρ; so we hopped in and rattled off down the road, waving goodbye and shouting thanks to the populace of Berbati.



Haunts of Herakles

The next morning I hopped on the bus to Tiryns while Jean went back to the Argos museum, which we had visited briefly on our way back from Berbati. She had seen Tiryns before and would see it again with the School, but this was my best chance.

This fort, sometimes said to be the birthplace of Herakles, seemed very small, even ludicrous, from the bus, but when I actually walked up into it, it was properly impressive. It sprouts from a low outcrop of limestone in the Argive plain, constructed of barely reshaped limestone boulders that match the bedrock. I took a lot of pictures. [Ph 4] In particular, I was



intrigued by how the corbelled “windows” in the great gallery at one end seemed so small when one looked up from the outside, yet were quite big when you encountered them from inside the gallery. Charmed, I ran up and down the rough little staircase [Ph 5], fortified with an enormous wall of Cyclopean boulders, which seems to have been added rather late to provide safer access to water—not that I could see any evidence of a spring or well at the bottom. I’ll take my teachers’ word for it.



I was virtually the only one there and got to talking (in Greek) with one of the guards after a while. He couldn't figure out why I was photographing such peculiar things. When I succeeded in communicating to him that I was an archaeology student, he took me around and showed me all sorts of little things one wouldn't notice: the bath drain, a few bits of frescoes still clinging at floor level, painted flooring still *in situ*, etc. I was delighted. He said that he had spent several months as a guard at Mycenae and somewhere else (I forgot where) before Tiryns, and that he gets paid 1500 Δρ a month (about \$50) for it. The shifts are 8 AM to 1 PM and 4 to 7 PM. It is so hot in the afternoon that everyone retires from the heat, eating lunch and then sleeping till four when the heat begins to abate. Only mad dogs and tourists go out in the afternoon sun.

So...that afternoon we went to Lerna, one of the rare Early and Middle Helladic (EH and MH) sites to have been excavated here, containing one of only two known EH "palaces" or large villas. (The other, at Tiryns, has been covered up again.) This one is nicknamed the House of Tiles because of all the red clay roof tiles so familiar from Italian and Spanish architecture. [Ph 6] It is a lovely site—and of course I had forgotten to bring

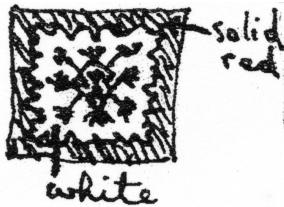


a new roll of film, after my profligacy at Tiryns. So I ran out of film after two pictures, which annoyed me thoroughly. The House of Tiles was burnt to a crisp about 2000 BC and enigmatically entombed under a nice round burial mound, nobody knows why. Lerna was once a swamp where Herakles fought the Hydra, and it was said still to be badly infested with mini-hydras: ringworms. So we put up with our thirst till we got back to the village of Lerna to wait for the bus and could indulge in bottled limonada.

¶

Mycenae

The next day we tackled Mycenae, ancient capital of the Mycenaean Greeks and home of Agamemnon. We didn't get there till about 2:30; we had missed the early bus by getting interested at the wrong moment in some woven wool bags. They were some of the loveliest—and most expensive—I've seen. I finally bought what I think was the nicest, woven in a much finer yarn than the one Katia Argyropoulou gave me in Pasadena: a predominantly green (and rather Byzantine) central design on an off-white ground with a dark red border. It cost me 170 Δρ (\$5.60)—a lot of money here, although not much at home for work of that caliber. Everyone remarks how pretty it is. My first souvenir! [Sk 2]



The Mycenae bus went only to the village, not the site a mile or two on up the hill, so we inquired the way of the supercilious waiters at the restaurant *La Belle Hélène* ["Helen the Beautiful"]. (Poor Clytemnestra still lives in her sister Helen's shadow.) As we trudged up the long sloping track in the hot sun, from time to time we climbed into Mycenaean chamber tombs along the way just to cool off—carefully checking first as to whether a φίδι (snake) had got the idea ahead of us. About two-thirds of the way up, before reaching any "beehive" tombs, an older American couple in a little English car pulled up and gave us a ride on up to the top. In return, we gave them a guided tour until their legs wore out, which was pretty soon. Again, scales had deceived me. The Cyclopean stones of the Lion Gate seemed enormous—how could they have puzzled those huge boulders together so tightly?—yet the gate itself was not so big as I had thought.

We climbed on up to the top of the citadel by ourselves, then decided we'd try to hunt out Prof. [George] Mylonas, who was supposedly excavating. (We had both met his daughter Ione at Bryn Mawr, but didn't really know her.) When we asked one of the guards where Mylonas might be, his face lit up and he said, "Ξέρετε Μυλωνάς?" (You know Mylonas?) and we told a little white lie and said yes. Ah! Well, Mylonas would be back in about twenty minutes, and the excavations were directly down the hill from where we stood. So we moseyed around for a while, including climbing down the narrow, rock-enclosed staircase to the well that the Mycenaean fortifiers had built here in their last beleaguered years.

When we came up from the underworld and descended the hill, Mylonas had returned. Jean, always the braver one, took the bull by the horns and said, "Hello, we're from Bryn Mawr and came over to look around. May we watch for a while?"

She couldn't have said anything better. The "Bryn Mawr" hit its mark and he replied, "Sure; come on down," and proceeded to explain that he was clearing Hellenistic rubble and part of Wace's dump heap off the lower Cyclopean wall on the southwest slope so as to trace its course. He wanted either to prove or to disprove Tsountas's theory that this wall had served as a terrace wall for an early continuation of the ramp from the Lion Gate to the megaron that served as palace. But since the wall proved to be taking six-foot jogs every ten feet at the most crucial stretch, Mylonas was abandoning Tsountas's theory, while still at a loss for a better idea. Anyway, he was only working on this while waiting for the official digging season to begin on Monday (June 25).

Where would he be working then? Why, he'd show us: over on the northwest slope, clearing the later road from the Lion Gate ramp up to the megaron.

Just then one of the workmen tossed up a piece of plaster painted a solid pink. Mylonas picked it up and regretted aloud that all *he* got was solid color while Miss Lang got all the designs! I remarked that I was going to visit her in a few days, so he handed me the plaster and said, "Here, take it to her—a present from me with my compliments. Maybe she can make it fit one of her pieces!" (It transpired, as we clambered over to the northwest slope, that he had been on the same plane to Athens as Miss Lang, days earlier.)

He showed us around on the northwest slope for a bit, at one point remarking, as he scrambled over a wall instead of taking the path around (he must be 70), "They say that if there is an easy and a hard way to get there, the archaeologist will take the hard way." His eye twinkled as he turned and watched us scramble over after him, and he added, "I'll make archaeologists of both of you yet!"

In answer to some questions, he presently went down to the Grave Circle by the Lion Gate and showed us a lot of details uncovered last season. Most important was a much lower and older circle of rough stones encompassing a slightly broader area than the present upper circle. It has long been noted that the present circle cuts across the corners of several graves. The very old circle uncovered by Mylonas encloses everything; it also seems to be at the same level as that at which the tombstones were originally placed.

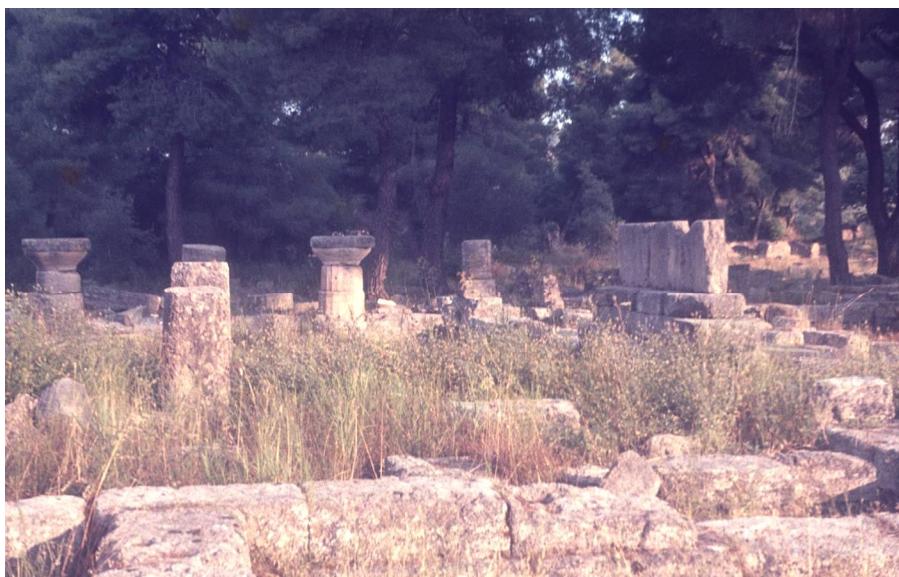
At this point Mylonas broke off, saying he had to go down to the village to receive a long-distance call at 4:30. We were welcome to ride down or stay if we liked. We took the ride, since we were hot and tired. We also took pleasure in seeing the faces of the waiters at *La Belle Hélène* as we hopped out of Prof. Mylonas's car.

¶

Olympic Leapfrog

The following day we set out for Olympia, catching the first bus to Tripolis at 10:00 AM, but at Tripolis we discovered that only one bus a day went to Olympia, 130 km away, and it left at 7:00 AM. So we got a hotel room with a shower—oh glory—and rested, then washed ourselves and everything we had. That is, we caught up on what we couldn't do at Nauplion. Next morning we got the bus and settled in for a four-hour ride. It was beautiful, and we even saw an owl sitting by the road, and later a turtle waddling along it. We also got to Olympia in the heat of the day. We checked into the hotel and then walked the half mile to the site, but despite the shady trees the heat was unbearable. So we retired to our room, slept until 4:00, then issued forth again.

Olympia is the most beautiful site I have seen yet, nestled in the hollow of the side of a hill, with tall pine trees and scrubby, wonderfully twisted olives. And lizards, blue sky, and an incessant chirrup of cicadas pulsating with the heat. The stone of the temples is a dull grey-brown shell limestone [Ph 7] rather than the dazzling blue-white marble of the Acropolis.



But it seemed, well, comfortably archaic. I didn't mind it, as some people do. Size has ceased to bother me, too, although here again I suppose it was different from what I expected.

But something else was quite unexpected. As we were walking to the site in the late afternoon, crossing the bridge over the small river (read: half-dried-up creek), we heard a great, loud quacking of ducks—we thought. Yet for all our looking we could see no ducks. Then we noticed half a dozen large frogs playing leapfrog (of all things) in the pool of water beside the bridge support.

“Βάτραχοι!” (frogs) I exclaimed, having read Aristophanes's play that spring.

“Βρεκεκεκέξ!” responded a frog, leaping onto another's back.

“Κοάξ, κοάξ!” replied the other, dumping his load as hastily as possible.

“Greek frogs really *do* say Βρεκεκεκέξ, κοάξ, κοάξ!” I chortled.

“Yeah,” Jean replied, “and I can see why Athena complained they were driving her nuts! Imagine having to listen to that racket all day.” She, for her part, had read the comic pseudo-Homeric epic, the *Battle of the Frogs and Mice*, that spring.

We wandered on, feeling erudite and edified.

This is the temple from which the exquisite reliefs came that we had admired so in the Louvre, the series of square metopes showing Herakles carrying out his twelve labors. My favorite is the one in which tricky Herakles, looking rather small between two gods, is about to give the world that rests on his shoulders back to Atlas long enough to adjust his pad (and slip away while he can). Athena, his patroness, stands unobserved behind him, holding up enough of the weight, with a light touch of her divine upturned hand, that her protégé is not crushed. So simple, so magnificent.



Nestor nested here

The next day, while Jean headed back to Athens and Classical summer school, I returned to Tripolis to catch a bus for Kalamata, Pylos, and the Bronze Age again. I had over two hours to wait, sitting in front of the appropriate bus station, watching the traffic go in spurts around the big dusty square. Most of the traffic here consisted of bicycles, whereas in Athens it was 80% buses and taxis. And just as the Athenian vehicles used their horns incessantly, so the bicyclists used their bells nonstop—except for a few who merely used theirs most of the time. At one point a boy of twelve or so came along balancing an enormous ouzo bottle on his lap with one hand,

steering with the other. Coming to a traffic snarl, quite undaunted he hoisted the jug (it must have been empty), banged it a dozen times on his bell, and sailed on around the corner at undiminished speed.

I reached Kalamata at 5:30 PM, discovered a 6:00 PM bus to Pylos, and hopped aboard. When we had been on the road some five minutes or more, the girl sitting across the aisle slid over into the seat next to mine and inquired if I spoke any Greek. I said I spoke a little, and we launched into my longest single conversation in Greek to date. She was a 19-year-old resident of a village near Pylos, studying law in Athens. She struck me as extremely intelligent: not only because she must have a lot of spunk to leave her village to become a lawyer, but also because, although she professed not to know any other languages, she was able—and had the patience—to turn sentences around, find other words, and so forth until I understood. We never had to drop a subject for lack of understanding. Her name was Georgía, and she made the long bumpy trip seem short.

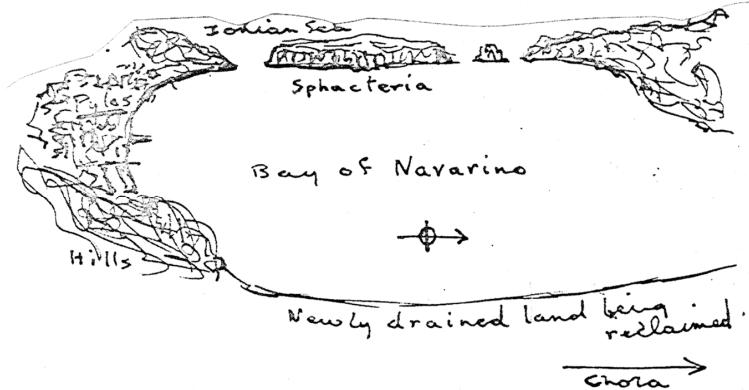
About quarter to eight I staggered into the hotel in Pylos, having been on the road twelve hours. I showered and went downstairs for supper, too tired to hunt anything up. The menu, I discovered, was a single fixed meal, pension style. I took it, though it was expensive by Greek prices: 50 Δρ, or \$1.70. (I tended to go by Greek standards, since my small amount of money had to last three months.) And that is where I first had the delicious soup for which I soon obtained the recipe I'm sending. In this case it was made with fresh fish-broth.

A'νγολέμου (Egg-lemon) Soup

Warm 2-3 cups mild salted broth (fish or fowl, not beef).
Separately, beat 1 egg with juice of $\frac{1}{2}$ lemon and pinch of salt.
Spoon warm (not hot!) broth into egg mixture while stirring.
Pour mixture back into pan and heat just to a simmer, stirring constantly.
Remove from heat and serve hot, or chill and serve cold.
(Can add more lemon to taste; can garnish with very thin lemon slice;
can add leftover rice etc.)

I learned that the bus for Chora, the village nearest the excavations of Nestor's palace, left at 6:00 AM, 11:30 AM, and 4:00 PM, turned around at Chora, and came right back—about 40 minutes each way. Knowing I jolly well better get the earliest bus (since Mabel Lang would be expecting me), I went to bed at 10:00, immediately after supper. Even so, morning came early with my 5:30 alarm, especially considering how long Monday had been. The sun was just rising over the Bay of Navarino as the bus chugged north past the newly reclaimed swampland and up the steep hill, out of the

little pocket where Pylos nestled. Sphacteria, the island on which the Athenians captured 300 Spartan hoplites during the Peloponnesian War (as Thucydides recounts and Aristophanes jokes) stands up against the blue sea and sky like a wall—it has very steep sides, almost like a box. No wonder they had such trouble with it. But it was too hazy to attempt a photo, especially considering how low the sun was. So here is a sketch from memory, good enough to give you an idea. If you get out the atlas, maybe you can figure it out. [Sk 3]



In fact, I hope you have put a big map of Greece up in my room to follow me on. My peregrinations will mean much more.

The conductor, spotting me as a foreigner, asked me if I really wanted to get off at Chora or at the Palace of Nestor—I had said Chora when I got my ticket. He kindly put me off at the proper spot. It didn’t occur to me until I was off the bus and it was on its way that it was 6:30 AM and what would I do until someone came to unlock the grounds at—what?—8:00? A couple of Greek workmen were there already, though, and they gave me to understand that Blegen would be along about 7:00 and that meanwhile there was a beehive tomb up on the hill outside the fenced area. So I went to visit the tomb.

It was small—the door just tall enough to walk through—and picturesquely overgrown, but I was grateful for the opportunity to see one up close. There had been just such vaulted circular tombs at Mycenae, enormous ones, which I had missed on the way up the hill because of the ride from the American couple, and on the way down because of the ride from Mylonas. They are constructed not with an arch—a much later invention—but with corbelling, in which each row of masonry is set a bit farther in than the last, until the gap is almost closed; then a capstone (rather than a keystone) is set on top. The overall shape is rather like that of a beehive, hence the nickname; the technical name is *tholos*. (Mylonas had told of hearing a tourist-lady, who clearly had not been paying close

attention to her guide, exclaim to her neighbor, “My, these Mycenaeans were wonderful—they even built tombs for their bees!”) Some of the large ones have square side-chambers, but this one did not. It was small and simple; Nestor lived out in the boondocks, the Wild West of its time.

I emerged from the olive grove around the tholos just in time to see the excavation’s jeep bumping into the driveway. Out of the jeep, in succession, came an elderly gentleman sporting a crash helmet—the 75-year-old Prof. [Carl W.] Blegen—plus an equally elderly woman rather taller than Blegen, whom I did not know, and a suntanned hatless couple of about 45. No Miss Lang. The older lady (I had the sense she was not Mrs. Blegen) spotted me and came over to ask if I were Miss Wayland. I acknowledged my identity and was handed a letter, with the verbal message that Miss Lang was working up at Chora and had sent this down to me; that I was to make myself at home at the excavations all morning, then catch the noon bus on up to Chora and spend the afternoon up there. The lady proceeded to show me around a bit, to introduce me to various people as we ran into them—Blegen, the foreman, the chief guard, and the Kittredges (the couple from the jeep [Bill and Caryl]). But she never introduced herself and no one ever called her by name. My only clue came from one of the workmen, who addressed her as Δεσποινίς “Miss”, whereas he addressed Mrs. Kittredge as Κυρία “Mrs.” It finally occurred to me, given her thorough knowledge of the site, that this must be (Miss) Marion Rawson, who had done a good deal of excavating with Blegen at Pylos. (I meant to ask Miss Lang, but I forgot; I always forget everything when I’m with Miss Lang. I also forgot to tell her hello from several people; I forgot to ask her a question about Miss [Prof. Machteld] Mellink; etc.)

Anyhow: I wandered around by myself for a long while looking at things. Presently I came upon a workman sitting on a piece of flooring, cleaning the incrustations off to get a better view of the paint. Seeing me, he said, “Χρωμα, χρωμα!” (color, color), pointing at the floor, and sponged it down so I could see the circles and wavy lines scattered about. I particularly liked the bathtub painted with spirals—I’m told a broken wine-cup was found in it. **[Ph 8]**



Was some poor soul relaxing in the bath when the palace was finally attacked and burnt to the ground? In the pantry area, the attackers had apparently emptied the jars of olive oil onto the fire, and it had burned so fiercely that the cups fallen from the pantry shelves vitrified to the floor, where they remain, unexcavatable. [Ph 9]



Eventually I ran across Mr. Kittredge in the bottom of a trench on the northwest side, busily copying into his notebook pertinent facts about a small group of pots just uncovered. When he finished and looked up, he saw me watching, and before I said a word he began to explain how he had found these walls here with NW-SE palace orientation, but now lower down he was finding those walls there with N-S orientation, and since he was finding MH sherds mixed with the LH IA stuff (although most of the palace is LH

III, parts may be earlier), he thought maybe he was at last finding actual *architectural* remains of MH. Sherds had been found in other parts of the site before, but not datable walls. And *look* (he hopped over into the next trench to show me) at the difference in style: these N-S walls had squared flattish stones instead of rough field stones... He broke off and looked at me.

“I don’t know why I’m giving you a lecture... You didn’t *ask* for one.” I grinned and assured him that I was delighted to listen as long as he had time to talk. It reminded me somehow of my little grammar-school when we lived in Strasbourg. Although everyone was very nice to me, the one person who was enthusiastic about helping me struggle with French was the one who knew the least about it—Rosemarie, the girl who had just arrived from German-speaking Switzerland. (Sort of: “We neither of us know very much, but I’ll tell you what I know and you tell me what you know, and we’ll both be ahead; and in any case I love to talk about it to anyone who wants to listen, because it’s fun and new to me!” That’s the way it *should* be, too.)

Mr. Kittredge maintained he didn’t know too much about it all; his first season digging was last year with Prof. [John] Caskey at Kea. When he mentioned Kea, I jumped and said, “Oh, I *knew* I’d seen you somewhere!” He looked startled and I hastily added, “I saw pictures of you among Caskey’s slides at the Mycenaean conference in Racine last September!”

I really enjoyed him. He bubbled like a fountain for an hour. Several times he went to direct a workman and I thought I was dismissed. Not at all. If something interesting happened or caught his eye, he’d enthusiastically wave me over and discuss it for a while, occasionally asking my opinion. At one point Miss Rawson came over and insisted I wear her extra hat so I wouldn’t get a sunburn.

Eventually I ambled back to the “Queen’s Megaron” in the Palace, where the Blegens (Mrs. B. had now arrived) and Miss Rawson were seated. They hailed me, asked me whether I had any questions, invited me to sit down, and introduced me to Mrs. Blegen. (I later found out that she can scarcely walk and has to be helped from chair to chair or chair to car, etc. That takes courage, to stay out in the middle of an excavation year after year, living in a little hilly village.) Miss Rawson announced that Miss Lang had said to make sure Miss Wayland went over and saw the potsherds Mrs. Kittredge was working on, “so she would learn they aren’t all so glamorous as the ones in the museums.” We all laughed—I, at least, at the special care Miss Lang always takes to teach students the bad with the good.

So I went to look at the potsherds. And they *were* pretty miserable, especially after the ones at Berbati, all painted and fresh from the kiln. But I still love piecing them together.

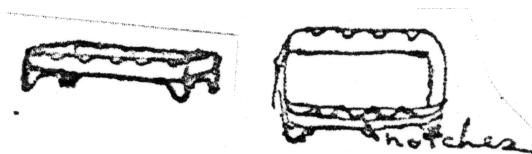
At noon I caught the bus into Chora, another 5 km up the road—and I mean mostly *up*. I got some lunch, then followed Miss Rawson's little hand-drawn map to the museum, still unfinished and not yet open. I arrived just as Miss Lang was issuing forth to see if I'd gotten lost. We went into the cool basement workshop and talked a while—I told her of my adventures. Then at 2:00, the Official Hour of Resumption of Work, she took me on a grand tour of the Pylos frescoes lying about the room. I'd seen most of them in pictures she had shown me in her office at Bryn Mawr when we were proofreading her Linear B publications; and she showed me where she'd found new little pieces of this and that.

One group of pieces she had published last year, as a woman's face and (not joining but clearly from the same fresco) a belt with part of a blouse, had caused quite a bit of comment. Emmett Bennett had written her saying that the belt ornament looked awfully like an ear, and couldn't she make it into a headdress. And Miss Lang had complained to me, "But it's only in Piet de Jong's *drawing* that it looks like an ear—it doesn't look like one on the fresco!" Lo and behold, when she got back to Pylos and tried making it into an ear to satisfy Bennett, the pieces fit! So the lady now has a bright orange and red feather headdress—and a rather peculiar ear! [Sk 4]



(Piet de Jong's drawing of the entryway of the Palace of Nestor, incidentally, makes it look far bigger than it is. There again I got hit with the "wrong-size" stick. The little interior courtyard is actually quite cozy.)

When the guard came back from lunch with the key, we went up to the museum proper. She kept calling him "Harry" and I finally asked her what sort of Greek would have *that* name; so she explained that his full name was Χαριλάος (Khariláos); and indeed Χάρη does sound almost like Harry. We saw all the pottery—including a Mycenaean shish-kebab brassier of clay, about a foot and a half long and a foot wide, on little feet, with notches opposite each other along the rim on the long sides. Room for half a dozen skewers at least. [Sk 5]



I could just imagine a painting by Exekias of a pair of Homeric warriors leaning over it, testing the meat with a long graceful thumb, waiting eagerly for their dinner.

Returning to the basement, she asked me what I wanted to do.

“Help,” I said, and held my breath.

She immediately set me to work on four series of fragments for which she had recently found more pieces in the “miscellany” box but hadn’t had time to try to fit together. I was ecstatic; I had wanted to get my hands on things Mycenaean since I was 12, after reading Anne Terry White [*Lost Worlds*; Random House, 1941]. At first, of course, everything seemed the same to me; it always does. But pretty soon I began to notice how to tell little differences in color, quality of plaster and design, thickness of plaster, and so forth. I had had the same experience of gradual enlightenment the rare times they let me mend Amerindian pottery at the Southwest Museum when I worked there at age 14. In the course of the afternoon, besides making two nice joins, I really began to understand something about working with fresco fragments.

Shortly before my bus was to leave, we knocked off and walked to the bus stop. Was I going back to Athens tomorrow? No, the day after. “I suppose you’ll want to spend tomorrow swimming in the bay and seeing historic Sphacteria.”

I loudly protested that I’d much rather come back and play with fresco fragments. If I wouldn’t be in the way... And if she didn’t mind... She seemed surprised (which surprised *me*), but said I was welcome if I really wanted to come. She asked which bus to expect me on, adding that she started work about 6:30—then grinned at my persistence when I said I’d be up on the 6:00/6:30 bus.

The next morning I found her just unlocking the door. She asked what I wanted to work on, and I replied, “On anything you want gotten out of your way.” This time she set me up with a can of water and an enormous crate of plaster packed in newspaper packages, each about the size of an Edam cheese. She said this was the second box of “Miscellaneous Plaster” from the ancient dump heap excavated last year—evidently one of several dumps used in Mycenaean times during a remodeling of the interior of the palace. The plaster seems to have come from several rooms, to judge by sizes and subjects; but only a fraction of the plaster seems to have been put

in *this* dump. It's as if four workmen were carrying torn-down plaster away, each using a separate dump; so this dump has every fourth basketful. Each basketful would contain a relatively coherent set of pieces, but those pieces would be relatively unrelated to the fragments in earlier and later basketsfull.

So I was to go through and pick out pieces that might fit in with the four categories I had been working with the day before, and with about six other categories she had, including the woman with the feathers and the funny ear. "If you find a piece that joins onto the lady, you get a footnote." We both laughed, because she had just finished explaining that there was so little that was new in the way of frescoes and Linear B tablets (just three tiny fragments) that they weren't worth a separate article, just a footnote in Blegen's. And Blegen had been saying that the excavations had produced so little that he might simply add a footnote to *her* article—so I would have a footnote to a footnote to a footnote to no article. No worry: I did not find any joins to the lady, though I located some scraps of the same fresco.

Around 10:00, after a short chat with "Harry", Miss Lang asked me if I wanted to see a Greek village carpentry shop, and the three of us tramped off to get a nice board for her to photograph fresco fragments on. She had told Khari that above all the board must have no pine-knots on it, so Khari helped argue with the carpenter—at lightning speed. Miss Lang speaks Greek fluently, but Khari was a native. "And also," she explained to me, "they'll listen to a man more than to a woman." Eventually a board was selected, sawn, planed, etc. to the proper size and shape—they had a number of large electric power tools, mostly of French and German make—and Khari took the board back to the new museum while Miss Lang took me down to the old workshop, used before the new museum was built. There she showed me all the rest of the frescoes, from the earlier excavations, and a lot of pottery, introducing me to a young man who was a "professional potmender from Athens." Evidently there are half a dozen of these men, trained in Athens in the proper techniques, who go around to the digs at the excavator's request to mend the pottery for the museum displays. (This one complained that his glue was being temperamental.)

At noon, after more fresco-ing, we knocked off for lunch. Miss Lang had ordered an extra lunch for me up at the excavation house, for which I thanked her. I finally remembered to give her her present of cigarettes, and the piece of plaster from Mylonas, which made her laugh. The excavation house had belonged to a doctor before the war and was used as a hospital and Red Cross station during it. When a big hospital was later built in Pylos, the one in Chora wasn't needed, so the excavation people bought the house and fixed it up for them to live in. All the excavation daybooks are

kept there—1939 as well as the 1950s to the present—along with various reference books. (The site was first excavated in 1939, and the very first trench went straight through the archive room, with Linear B tablets everywhere. Then the war broke out and they had to stop. It must have about killed them to do so. They refilled the trenches and took the precious tablets to Athens, packing them away in a bank vault where they survived the war. When Blegen finally was able to re-open the site after both WW II and the Greek civil war, he went straight for the archive rooms, of course. And the tablets they found that summer, 1951, provided just enough additional information and statistics for Ventris to decipher Linear B.)

“Standard excavation lunch” prepared for me consisted of a glass of tomato juice, a slice of bread, peanut butter, raisins, olives, chunks of cucumber and of cheese, and a large fig. Evidently the Chora-Pylos-Kalamata district is famous for its figs, and this one was large, juicy, and delicious. In fact, an altogether delicious lunch. Unfortunately, Miss Lang had picked up the pip and was eating only rice and yogurt for three days, the local cure. “I don’t like to take pills,” she said, as I guiltily enjoyed my feast—doubly guilty, since I too had had a very mild version of the pip, since Olympia, which I was ignoring.

After lunch I looked at excavation books while Miss Lang read a novel. She offered me a novel too, but I was curious to know what archaeologists write down first hand at a dig. They didn’t teach us that. She suggested one of Marion Rawson’s day-books as being especially good; so I looked at that for a while, then fished out William McDonald’s 1939 day-book—the one which records the first tablet finds. It was on the evidence in this day-book alone that Bennett had to try to reconstruct the find-spots, and hence the groupings, of a great many of the tablets. His purpose (which he presented as a paper at the Racine Conference) was ultimately to figure out which tablets had been stored together in single baskets, and how the baskets had been arranged about the room—in other words, what the Mycenaean filing system had been. My admiration for Bennett’s patience and tenacity, already high, increased yet more. But I also marveled at the difficulties facing a conscientious excavator: every conceivable detail has some special significance for some purpose, and you may not even know yet what that purpose will be. How much is it humanly possible to notice and write down? Excavation with a toothbrush is no joke when it comes to *Kleinfunde* [“small finds”]: you need a small toothbrush and a large notebook.

Miss Lang also brought out the three new tablet scraps: actually, two scraps and a sealing. One hadn’t been washed yet and it was impossible to see any writing; it merely looked like a longish brown lump. I suddenly

understood why Miss Mellink jokes about looking in the ravine at Mycenae for the tablets one would expect from that site. Schliemann used the ravine as an early excavation dump; tablets are conspicuously few at Mycenae, and no one knows why. But they would be so easy to miss. Miss Lang took the occasion of my presence, since I had proofread Linear B with her for four years, to wash the scrap, and lo and behold, it had a sign (the last of a word), an ideogram, and a number on it. She recognized it as belonging to a particular type and flipped through the tablet pictures till she found the one it would probably join. Then she put it back in its cigarette box and made a note on the cover as to what to try to join it to when she returned to Athens. (Cigarette and match boxes are widely used here to preserve very small finds; and since most of the men smoke, these boxes are everywhere. I now possess a couple of very pretty little match boxes with figures from Classical Greek pottery on them.)

We worked till 4:15, then went down the hill to shop before the bus came. She said she needed to hunt down a broom and ordered me to look for a straw hat. Miss Rawson had evidently worried about my hatlessness aloud to Miss Lang, who was now determined to correct the omission, adding that she had seen all sorts of nice ones in one of the local stores. So we went hat shopping.

I may have colorful taste in clothes, but I'm very conservative about my headgear. While I was looking for the plainest hats, Miss Lang was looking for the brightest. But in any case, they were all one style: the shape hat, almost a cloche, that Grandmother was wearing in her pictures of their trip around the world in 1933. None was of plain straw, so we finally agreed on one of plain and green straw, with a green band, which I then tried on. Miss Lang was tickled by my appearance and insisted that I looked "cute"—one of the last adjectives I would have expected, either from her or about me! But since she was so tickled by it, I declared I would buy it, at which point she informed me that it was to be a present from her "in memory of Chora."

The next day, at Miss Lang's suggestion, I took the Automotris (a narrow-gauge train) back to Athens from Kalamata—a much shorter and cheaper, although more tiring and less atmospheric ride than the bus. I had to wait a couple of hours in the Kalamata railroad station, and sat writing my "chronicle" while watching them shuffle freight cars in the yard with a wonderful old chug-chug steam engine. (I had to move when the engine puffed up-wind of me and then parked!)

Boarding at last, I found the cars simply had double seats facing each other in pairs on either side of an aisle, all the way down each car, much like

the Paoli Local. Because it was hot, people kept the windows wide open, so the trip was also quite noisy. Three women befriended me and had me sit with them, laughing and talking the whole way. They spoke nothing but Greek, of course, and being very curious about me, they plied me with questions about myself, what I was doing here, and America in general. They also plied me with homemade cookies they had brought to eat on the train, since nothing was available to buy. The one part of the conversation that I recall vividly occurred when I began to need to find a toilet but saw no evidence of any in our car. The old 78-rpms of Modern Greek lessons that I had listened to so assiduously at Bryn Mawr had taught me that the polite way to ask for the facilities was, Που ε'ιναι το μέρος; (Pou ine to meros? literally “Where is the place?”). But they had not heard these records and hadn't a clue what I was asking. The place? The place? Well, we're just passing through X, and in a while we'll get to Corinth... I never could get them to understand and just had to hold it till Athens.

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II. Athens, Delphi, and the Islands

Ἄπολλον, Ἀπολλον... *ἀπόλλων* *εμός.* (*Agamemnon* 1080)
Apollo, Apollo... my destroyer! —Cassandra

Early July. When I returned to Athens, I was to stay a few nights with Katia Argyropoulou and her aunt, Mrs. Phlorou, but my postcard to reaffirm my date of arrival hadn't got there. Eventually we connected, however. I had left my main suitcase with them while I was in the Peloponnesos, taking only my little "carpet bag" so as to be totally mobile. With care, I could pack into it a little nightgown, a skirt and two blouses (that new synthetic "crepe robin" material is wonderful: it's so light and never gets wrinkled!), underwear, a sweater, swimsuit, small towel, and a minimum of toiletries. My sandals serve as bedroom slippers and galoshes both. But it was nice to get back to some *different* clothes.

The next day Mrs. Phlorou took me to meet George Argyropoulos's family out in Daphne, a lovely suburb north of Athens, just south of Eleusis. I met his mother, Mrs. Argyropoulou, as well as his two brothers, Panagiotis (about 25) and Vasilis (about 8). Everyone was terribly nice to me. They insisted on taking me to a little taverna in Daphne for supper, where we had a delicious lamb steak grilled on an open fire. It must have been soaked first in some light marinade—white wine or rosé (not retsina!)—with oregano and perhaps tarragon or sage, I'm not sure. I was savoring my second exquisite bite when they passed me a big wedge of lemon and said (in Greek), here, you mustn't forget the lemon! So I allowed them to douse it liberally with lemon juice—and with that it was even more heavenly than before!

It was arranged that Panagiotis—Panos for short—would take me the next day, Saturday, to the famous Athenian beach called Asteria. (He was the only one there who spoke English, and he spoke it very well.) So we met in the city about 10:00 and went out to Asteria in the suburb of Glyphada. It was a lovely hot day, perfect for a swim. It must have been 11:30 by the time we got out onto the beach in our swimsuits; and then we must needs sit a bit (half an hour) in good Greek style before going in. Panos insisted that I had better put Nivea—I had my tube of it—on my back so I wouldn't burn. I anointed myself, then we went into the water.

Now, the Pacific Ocean is icy cold, but the Aegean is deliciously cool and the sun is hot. We swam around for a bit among the considerable crowd; then Panos got a surf-boat—like a boat underneath but absolutely flat on top, and more tipsy even than a canoe. We paddled and swam for quite a while until tired, then got out and sat drying in the sun for maybe 10 minutes till someone vacated the shade of an umbrella. We sat in the shade another 45 minutes while I had an ice cream cone and Panos a beer; then we dressed and departed around 3:00. Panos left me near the Melathron (where I was now ensconced again), giving me instructions please to come out to Daphne again the next morning and spend the day with his family (although he himself had to be back to his navy base).

Everything was fine until about 4:30, when my back began to burn like fire. Oops, I thought, and plastered on the Nivea. I had gotten slight sunburns before, riding horses in the Idaho desert, but this was more than slight. I had to sleep on my stomach that night; in fact I slept for eleven hours. When I put my dress on in the morning, I noticed that the little spot on my right shoulder that had gotten the worst of it at Berbati (from going north in the morning and south in the afternoon) had a couple of blisters. My arms and legs were pink but OK; it was my back that was still on fire and quite tender.

When I got to Daphne, as soon as the women saw how red I was, they all chorused “POpopopoPO!” and plastered me with more Nivea, insisting that I leave my blouse off for a bit since there were no men home. We talked for a while, in Greek, resorting to French when necessary, ate lunch and had siestas. By now my whole upper back was blistering and they kindly put some special cream for burns on it (I was getting a bit scared by this time). Presently Mrs. Argyropoulou and I walked down to see the famous Byzantine monastery at Daphne. It was lovely, ruins afloat in tall green weeds, with various mosaics and paintings on the ceilings and upper walls. Everything below about 15 feet had been destroyed, however. Unfortunately I didn’t have my camera along. When we got back I met the elder Mr. Argyropoulos, who had just returned from the Peloponnese. He was absolutely charming: a very gentle, quiet man, very proud of his garden. He showed me around it, telling me the (Greek) name of every fruit tree and so forth. He had apricots and peaches and I think plums, and arbors of white and red grapes. But he was proudest of his gardenias. I communicated to him that now I understood why George so loved ours at home in Pasadena, and that I used to take some to George and Katia whenever I went to visit them. He was very pleased.

Returning to the hotel about 7:00, I had a light supper and went to bed, sensing that I might be coming down with a cold. Cruel irony! A burn and a cold at the same time! At 6:00 AM I awoke feeling lousy: I couldn't sleep on my stomach any more because my sinuses were so stuffed up, and I couldn't sleep on my back because the slightest touch on those blisters made me want to shriek. So I got up, gargled, and decided I would have to sit up. I sat and started writing a letter; but after 15 minutes I was so exhausted I knew I had to lie down. But how?? I finally settled gingerly on the less burnt left side—rather like contriving to sleep when I had shingles in high school—and fell into a heavy sleep. In fact, I slept as if drugged for most of the next 36 hours, rousing myself painfully to go to the bathroom and to eat a little. Now I also had the pip. (Try ordering a tray of tea and boiled rice in a language you hardly know from a waiter who can't imagine why you want that food at that hour, when you are so groggy you can't hold your eyes open for 20 minutes.) By the second evening I was able to stagger out and consume a cheese sandwich and hot chocolate; I also think I wrote a letter, but I can't quite remember.

Mostly, after that, I lay in bed and memorized the Greek words for the various pieces of furniture in my room, when I wasn't sleeping. On Wednesday my back began to peel—in hunks so terrifyingly thick that I did my best not to *let* it peel by applying more Nivea. In the afternoon I got up and kept awake by doing some wash, mainly so my muscles wouldn't get too weak. My cold was improving and the sore throat was gone. By Thursday I started to believe I would live through this. My head was clearing, my back no longer hurt much—instead it itched—and my stomach deigned to accept more robust food. So I washed up and, in the late afternoon when things re-opened, I issued forth to the Benaki.

The Benaki Museum is the place that has all the folk costumes (among other things). Mr. Benaki had collected them from all over Greece. I spent a happy couple of hours there, marred only by the discovery that I wasn't even allowed to *sketch* anything, much less photograph, without the express permission of the director, who wasn't in. And they had no postcards or catalogue. Saturday I spent the morning crawling bead by bead through half of the Mycenaean treasures in the National Museum. I also sleuthed out the Delphi bus station.

All roads in Italy may lead to Rome, but each region of Greece seems to have a bus station all its own in Athens. There is no central station. So to go, for example, to Delphi, you have to begin by finding the bus station that serves it. Then you have to find out when the buses leave and return, and how much the trip costs, and whether you need a reservation. Some of this

information is posted, but much of it has to be obtained by standing in a long line of anxious, fidgeting people, then trying to make yourself understood and understand the answers amid the noise and confusion. I approached the Delphi bus station with not very high hopes of getting enough answers on my first attempt to actually plan a trip—I’m learning to take things on a slower time scale. It’s called Greek Time.

But luck was with me, and I left the station the amazed possessor of a round trip ticket to Delphi leaving the next day. I figured I was well enough now to sit on a bus and watch the world go by. It was a four-hour ride, on the usual dirt roads with the usual blare of the driver’s favorite Greek folk music the whole way. (Good thing I like Greek folk music.) I’ve learned not to sit in the front of the bus, where—since I’m “obviously” a foreigner—they always want to put me. If you sit in the front, you can’t help seeing all the near accidents. So I insist on sitting farther back. That tips people off to the fact that I know at least a little Greek, and soon the questions start. Where are you from? Why are you here? Surely you must have some Greek relatives, to be here? Ah, archaeology! Would you like some cookies? We can move those chickens! What have you seen so far? When I’m not talking with people, I sit with my tiny dictionary and Dover phrase-book in my lap, alternately looking at the slowly passing scenery and looking up words my interlocutors used or memorizing lists of vocabulary. The phrase-book is excellently organized and my Greek is improving.

At Delphi I stayed at the Youth Hostel for 50 cents for the night, again getting in without a card because the man had virtually no business. My roommates were very nice—a Dutch girl and an English girl. First I hit the museum during the one hour that it was still open (12:00-1:00). Then, still feeling a bit weak, I went all around the site slowly, from shady rock to shady stone, sitting and contemplating the view from each shady seat. Sitting by the spring, I could even enjoy a sort of background music from the water tumbling out of the vertical rock face. (It later took me half an hour to scrub the grime from my skirt!) Delphi is really beautiful, even nicer than Olympia or Lerna or Pylos, I think. It simply *hangs* on the precipitous side of Mt. Parnassos. I do hope my pictures come out. [Ph 10]



At 5:00 I returned to the museum for an hour and ran into the English couple I had met on the bus who had helped me get into the Youth Hostel. They were very interested in everything and very at a loss. So I offered to give them a guided tour and spent another hour and a half seeing the site again with them, this time in the cool of dusk—absolutely delightful. I saw completely different things, in a way, with them than I had seen when alone. So it was lovely both times.

That evening I wandered around amidst the tourist bait and bought some more woven work—the prices were relatively low in Delphi. I got Ann a present (but she'll have to wait till I bring it home), and I got myself a woven rug with a scrumptious Byzantine design (related to that on the bag) for \$3.66.

¶

‘η βιβλιοθήκη “the book-putting-place”

Back in Athens the next afternoon, I finally walked over to the American School for the first time. Everything seemed quite closed, though

a little door in one of the overwrought iron gates was open. I peered around for a while, then turned to leave. But who should be ambling absent-mindedly up the street but Prof. Sterling Dow of Harvard, whom I had met at the Mycenaean Conference at Racine the year before. My normal reserve must have been asleep with the heat (and it was very hot), because before I knew it I was striding across the curb, right hand firmly extended, saying, “Why *hello*, Professor Dow! Do you remember me, from the Racine Conference? The name is Wayland.” He looked rather startled, of course, and I continued with a solid stream (as I wheeled around and continued walking—*towards* the School—with him) about how I had dropped over to look around but the library seemed to be closed, etc., etc. He, in good Dow fashion, quickly picked up the ball. “Oh,” he said, “the library isn’t really closed. I’ll take you up and show you around.” Then he kindly led me not to what I had thought was the library but to another building across the street! (I later learned that I had been looking at the dormitory.) I kept my mouth shut, though, and we went in and up the stairs, into the reading room. He zoomed off to fetch the librarian, and I was left standing in the middle, face to face with...

Miss Mellink! We greeted each other with slightly startled hellos, while Dow returned with the librarian, who without further ado began to show me how to find things in the library, to instruct me in its casual set of rules, and finally to whisk me off to the stacks to show me specifically where the Linear A and B books were. This last was at Prof. Dow’s instigation, which proved that he *had* remembered me, eventually!

I puttered around, then sat down with a Linear B book. Miss Mellink stopped by on one of her treks to the stacks and we chatted a minute. She had seen Prof. [Albrecht] Goetze—my soon-to-be mentor at Yale—in Athens a few days before as he was wending his way home, I suppose from Baghdad. She was clearly very busy, so I merely intimated that I would love to talk with her sometime, and left it up to her. I read Linear B until dinner time and departed.

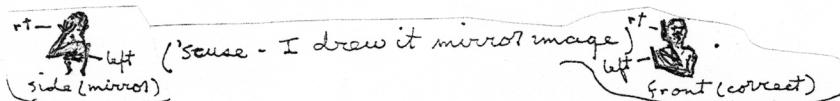


Mykonos and Delos

Wednesday I sailed to Mykonos, third class, which is deck class. It was a lovely all-day trip on the Aegean, which was smooth as glass. We sailed past Sounion with its temple of Poseidon overlooking the sea at the very end of the Attic peninsula: I must go there by land when I’m back in Athens. We passed the island of Kea, where Caskey excavated last year,

then Andros and Tinos, with people getting on and off at each island. This was the equivalent of the local bus. On the last hop, from Tinos to Mykonos, there were almost no tourists, and of them only an English girl and I were on the top deck. A whole group of Greek men got on at Tinos, headed for the last island on this boat's run (I don't know what island). They were kinda high, though not really drunk, and proceeded to sing and dance and cavort about the deck while all the other Greeks sat around and laughed at them. I was hoping they would start some real folkdancing, but instead they settled down to playing a sort of tag. The English girl and I gradually figured out the following set of rules.

One man is "It" and stands in the center while everyone else crowds up behind him. "It" blinds his eyes by holding his right hand flat beside his right temple, then passes his left hand under his right armpit, leaving the flat of his left hand exposed behind his right shoulder. [Sk 6]



The other guys all crowd around behind, and someone smacks "It" on his exposed left palm. "It" whirls around and tries to guess who hit him—by position, guilty expression, etc. But everyone instantly puts his right hand up, with the forefinger up, and tries to pretend that he himself did it. If "It" can ascertain the culprit anyhow on the first guess, the culprit has to be "It". But if he chooses wrongly, then he himself must be "It" again. They kept this game up for almost an hour, from Tinos to Mykonos.

We had to disembark at Mykonos via little motorboats (not uncommon, though not ubiquitous, in the islands), and the English girl and I got separated in the process. But she had told me that islanders often come down to the boat and ask if you want a place to stay for the night—i.e., in their homes rather than in the hotels—and that it is usually quite nice (relatively speaking), clean, very cheap, and safe—as long as you don't drink the water. Indeed, as soon as I got off I was accosted by a nice-looking young woman of 30-35. I asked her how much and she said 18 Δρ (54¢), so I went with her. She had beds for three set up in a room on the second floor, and a glance at the belongings of the absent roommates proved that they were female; so I stayed. It was quite nice, and even though the toilet had to be flushed by ladling water by hand, it didn't smell half as bad as most rural toilets in Greece.

The most amazing single feature about Mykonos, to my mind, is the "streets". There is only one street in Mykonos that would let a Volkswagen

bug pass through—the “highway” to the other major town on the island. This road starts at one side of town, in the square at the end of the harbor breakwater, and passes along the waterfront (lying between town and harbor) to the other side, then climbs off over the hill and away. Almost every building along this road is a hotel, café, restaurant, or tourist shop. But the cafés have the lead. In the daytime the quai is full of sailors and tourists, many of the latter ogling a large pelican named Petros who stands about hoping for handouts. Apparently he is the latest in a string of pelicans to take up residence here, each in turn being named—you guessed it—Petros. About sunset, as the small amount of vehicular traffic disappears, the café tables and chairs encroach onto the roadway in increasing numbers, until fully half of it is covered by them, occupied by the adult male population drinking coffee or ouzo and playing cards or watching the female population strolling up and down the unencumbered half of the roadway next to the water. These are wheeling babies, strolling children, and gossiping.

About every forty feet a small gap appears between the buildings. This is a side street, averaging four feet in width at the bottom. [Ph 11]



Sheer whitewashed walls rise up on either side of the street, often overhung by balconies, the trailing tendrils of potted plants, and laundry. Steps—also whitewashed—up to these balconies chew large pieces out of the thoroughfare here and there, while beneath them, and hence shaded in the heat of the day, are whitewashed benches made of the same stuff as the walls. The crooked street is paved with smooth, flattish flagstones, roughly circular or oval, laid out like a puzzle, and whitewashed as well. The whitewash is usually worn through in the middle of the passageway.

I first saw this wonder at night. The sky was an inky blueblack in the narrow slit above, but wherever a light shone into the street from a window or balcony above, the street was bright as day, the whitewash reflecting the light from every side. When I issued forth in the morning at 8:30 (having slept so late because I was tired from the boat and hadn't set my alarm because of the roommates), the sun was hitting the tops of the walls on one side of the street with a dazzling glare, which made the sky above look dark and blue by contrast and gave the street a cool splendor which took my breath. All of a sudden I understood what the tiny streets of ancient Mycenae, Berbati, and even Pompeii must have looked like. And when I reached Delos later that morning, I could mentally add the second stories and whitewash everything until that enormous expanse of rocky ruins on the Sacred Island looked quite habitable again.

The boats, little ones, went to Delos every morning at 9:00 and returned at 1:00. Since the trip takes 45 minutes, that left three hours to see Delos—and the place is *huge* (even if, as islands go, it is very small). And it was blazing hot with no breeze—everyone on Mykonos was complaining of this rare lack of a cool breeze.

The first thing I noticed as I walked up from the little dock [Φ] was the lizards: I have never seen so many lizards in my life as in the two hours I spent tramping around Delos. Every nook and cranny seemed to contain one, from two inches to a foot in length, of half a dozen varieties. Most of them scuttled, but one grey-green type with a large frilly collar (the biggest kind) got up on its two hind legs and ran, looking for all the world like a miniature dinosaur! They were amazing.

I wandered around for an hour in the sanctuary of Apollo, retired for a cold bottled limonada in the tourist pavilion, tramped up the sacred road to the top of Mt. Kythna (a mere hill, but hot and steep) to try to see the Mycenaean remains (which I couldn't find for the Hellenistic ones, but the view was exquisite); padded back down via the Hellenistic theater and Roman town, retired for a second limonada, and spent the last 45 minutes in

the small museum. I had left the museum to last because of the increasing heat.

When I got back to the dock, people were cooling off by swimming in the crystal clear water, reputedly the clearest in the Aegean. It looked lovely, but I didn't dare swim at midday again, after my experience at Asteria. I was coming to realize you're getting a double dose: both the direct sunlight and the reflected. So I waited until 4 PM, back in Mykonos, and then set out for a swim.

I decided I'd rather not swim in the murky bay, where others were swimming, so I went along the shore until I found a nice rock outside the harbor proper but still well inside the big bay. Perching my shoes and towel on it, I waded in. I was in up to my knees and maybe six feet out when I realized that the rocks here stayed shallow for a good 20 feet out from shore. And since I didn't relish scrambling over 20 feet of slippery submerged boulders with sea urchins, anemones, and for all I knew octopuses in all the crannies in between, I stopped to consider going back to the harbor. As I debated, standing still in my sandy spot amid three submerged boulders, the water grew glassy clear again. There is no tide or surf in most of the western Aegean, only little ripples from the breeze. Suddenly I was startled by something brushing my foot; I looked down to spy an inch-and-a-half-long leggy creature like a newt or salamander sitting calmly on my big toenail. It was beige with brown speckles. I thought of an argument I had once had as to whether one of the "fish" inlaid in silver on a Mycenaean dagger was really a fish or rather a salamander, and decided I was definitely right. [sk?]

Then I saw a red starfish, five or six inches in diameter, sprawling under the boulder opposite. I stepped back a bit and my salamander swam off. But now I noticed half a dozen shells scuttling about in a most un-shellfish fashion and soon determined that these objects contained hermit crabs. I picked up a large one approaching my right heel in hopes of seeing the critter, but of course he immediately withdrew from sight. So I set him face up on the nearest submerged boulder and watched. After a couple of minutes I turned to inspect a sea anemone that looked rather like a chanterelle mushroom, and when I turned back to the crab I spied a green and red claw slowly and cautiously emerging. A feeler popped out and vibrated furtively; a second feeler; a second claw. The first claw was now well over the rim of the shell and with a quick movement it caught a knob of the rock, flipped the shell over into its proper position, and the whole apparition scuttled away into the nearest cranny. I sighed, noted the salamander on my toe again, and wondered what to do. But the next wavelet

imported a four-inch jellyfish into the immediate vicinity, so I departed for the harbor without waiting to find out whether Aegean jellyfish sting.

I should have left it at that. But I still wanted a swim, so I swam in the not-so-clear harbor for half an hour and managed to step squarely onto an unseen sea urchin, collecting half a dozen spines in the bottom of my foot. I got out, sat down on the sand, and pulled out four which were merely caught in the tougher skin; but two were deep into my big toe and had broken off there. I dug them out later with a needle doused with alcohol from my little vial of it. I know I got the spines out completely, but the purply-black ink remained: my first tattoos. I hope they are my last.

The late afternoon I spent wandering through the crooked streets of Mykonos, at every third turn finding myself confronted by a little white chapel. I was later told there are 300 on the island, and I can believe it. Every time I found myself on the outskirts of town, I was facing either the water or half a dozen twelve-sailed windmills. Unfortunately I couldn't get a picture of them because I always had the sun in my face at that moment. But I made a sketch. [Sk 7]



Μονσειον = Museum “place of the Muses”

I returned to the Piraeus on the boat that night—all boats go back at night—but second class, so I had a berth. Between the dramamine and all the exercise I had had, I slept like a log till we docked at 6:00 AM. Then a ride back into Athens on the rattletrap old yellow metro car that plies between the Piraeus and Omonia Square. My room at the Xenias Melathron was not ready yet, and indeed it was still early in the day. But it eventually transpired that, despite my reservation, reconfirmed by me at least three times before I left for Delos, they had no room at all for me and suggested that I double with Jean (who was staying there at the moment) in her tiny single. But Jean was still trying to recover from mild sunstroke contracted on the first School field-trip and wasn't up to having company. Plus, my innards were now feeling increasingly evil—that just wasn't going to work. I was going to have to find another hotel. I was now about to dissolve in tears on the spot; all I wanted was a place to lie down and be sick, not to be tramping around Athens in 100° heat looking for a hotel. The people at the

desk apologized profusely; and finally one of the chief helpers (whom I had previously aided with his English) took pity on me and called a pension a couple blocks away, off of Kolonaki Square, which proved to have a room I could have for the night. So he showed me the way over to it.

It was like heaven—a dark blue and white room with a double bed all for me to sprawl on; a pink and white tiled bathroom across the little hall, of which I seemed to be the only user—and it didn't smell bad. The room was quite expensive by Greek standards (100 Δρ or \$3.33); but it was worth it when I was sick. I swallowed a good dose of my Enterovioform, undressed, lay down, and slept for two hours; got up and used the john in haste; slept another two hours; used the john in less haste, and even felt good enough to take a bath. That in turn made me feel good enough to eat a few μπισκότας (biskotas), sort of like Petit Beurre cookies, sold for 2 Δρ at every kiosk. I took more Enterovioform, slept until 10 PM, then awoke feeling much better, the pain gone and not even groggy any more. I opened the window to the cool evening air: I had a lovely view of the night sky with its stars and could hear strains of *La Tosca* (one of my favorite operas) floating in from the livingroom radio of Madame Sophie, the proprietress. I opened the door so I could hear it better; but soon she turned it off. I slept peacefully through the night and woke up feeling quite refreshed and *quite* ready for a nice breakfast. Now I was hungry!

By the time I finished breakfast, the Melathron had my room ready, so I moved back. Sunday I went back to the National Museum and inched my way through more of the Mycenaean collection, finally finishing the job a couple of days later. I wanted photos, but taking pictures required buying a permit—I figured it at about 4.5 Δρ per picture, with no guarantee of results, since I had no light meter and no personal calibration on my film yet. So when I found myself besieged by the usual swarm of picture and postcard sellers as I came out onto the front steps, I decided to see what their prices were. Sets of 10 slides of National Museum stuff cost 70 Δρ each or 7 per slide. That's not bad in itself, but unfortunately they had them packaged in such a way that I only wanted a few out of each set. I finally picked out two with the highest number of slides I actually wanted and hope to take some photos of my own later.

I went back to the area of the Agora and Acropolis several times while in Athens, usually by walking through Syntagma and on through the maze of narrow streets beyond. For one thing, the big post office and the American Express office were both at the bottom of the square, and on a little cross-street just beyond was the chief bookstore, at least for the likes of me: Eleutherodakis. I spent many happy hours looking at their huge archaeology

picturebooks, clearly set out to attract the tourists. I also purchased an occasional blue-cross-stitched linen from one of the elderly women sitting in chairs embroidering in the light at the various crossroads. I repeatedly explored the north slope of the Acropolis, which is a steep maze of tiny streets, paths, and staircases, debouching unexpectedly onto a chapel or taverna or cave.

[Ph 12-15]





Over on the south side I visited the theater in which all those famous Greek tragedies and comedies we had read were first performed: sitting on a seat there gave me a really odd feeling of connectedness to the past. But the most amazing place was Pandrosou Street, which I mentioned before.

Long and very very narrow, Pandrosou Street was apparently the old street where all the tinsmiths had their shops. Shopping in Athens isn't like shopping at home, where each area has a variety of shops. In Athens there must have been something like the old guild system of northern Europe, where artisans of a feather flocked together. If you want linens, you must go to thus and such street, where you will find dozens of such shops one after

the other; if you want tin or copper pans, you go to Pandrosou. By now, there were tourist-oriented shops in and among the tin and copper vendors—it was close to the Agora, lower gateway to the Acropolis, and it ended at one of the main metro stations. The lower end may have been the old tailors’ “guild” because there were a lot of tailors there who sold, among other things, parts of old and new folk costumes. And that, of course, caught my eye.

Rummaging through the stuff, I noticed a scrap of embroidery that had clearly been ripped off the bottom of a woman’s costume. Several yards long and less than three inches wide, it was done in an unusual technique, couching, with a thick colored cord laid down on the surface of the cloth to form the pattern, then sewn down with invisible stitches. I wanted many other pieces of folk wear, but this torn edge was the best I could afford—not that they were terribly expensive, but I had little money for extras. I eventually determined that this intriguing scrap belonged to the Karagouna costume of Thessaly. The vendors, seeing my interest, kept asking me if they could measure me for a complete Amalía costume—tight maroon jacket decorated with gold braid in curliques, a matching hat with gold curlicues and a long gold tassel, plus a long blue skirt. It’s based on the court costume, itself based on the Peloponnesian folk costume of the first Queen of Greece, Amalia. I brushed them off, but made a mental note to come down and have one made for me if I should have enough money left at the end of the summer.

And so back to the Xenias Melathron to pack for two weeks in Crete.



III. Crete.

χορόν
τω 'ίκελον οιόν ποτ' 'ενί Κνωσω ε'νρείη
Δαιδαλος 'ήσκησεν καλλιπλοκάμω 'Αριάδνη.
'ένθα 'ωρχευντ'

a place like that which once, in broad Knossos,
Daidalos smoothed out for fair-tressed Ariadne.

There they danced... (*Iliad* 18.590-94)

Mid-July. The Olympic Airways flight to Crete was quite nice and smooth, though annoyingly hazy. I found myself sitting next to a young woman from North Carolina, a Mrs. Dekker, whose husband was working in Athens for four months on a traffic survey. She was coming to spend three days in Crete—and quite nervous since she'd never traveled alone before. We were intending to stay at the same hotel, so we decided to stick together a little. (I remembered my terrified first day in Athens, having no idea even how to get anything to eat.) While waiting for the airport bus into Iraklion, we met two other American girls, New Yorkers. So once in the city we all took a cab together to the hotel—to discover they didn't have a room for anybody, not even for Mrs. Dekker who was supposed to have a reservation. (Familiar.) But they called around and found accommodations for us at a third-class hotel (the original one was second class)—a double and a triple room. The triple cost a whole 5 Δρ (15¢) more than the double, but was more airy; Mrs. Dekker and I took the triple and the other two took the double.

That afternoon about 4:30 when the sun was beginning to lose its glare, we issued forth to Knossos, ancient capital of the Minoans—a very simple process, since buses leave every 20 minutes for the 5 km 1.70 Δρ (5¢) run each way. While we were waiting for the bus we found a little café that sold limonada (bottled and fizzy, rather like 7-Up) very cold and very cheap—native not tourist price.

My first glimpse of ancient Knossos, fittingly enough, was of the ancient Minoan paved road to the Northwest Entrance [**Ph 16**], coming up from the harbor town of Amnissos. It is visible from the bus just as one enters the modern town of Knossos; nothing else can be seen from the bus.



This Minoan road is a narrow (ca. 4 feet wide) causeway of stones, much like little streets on Mykonos. On either side is a flanking causeway, set 2 or 3 inches lower than the main one, and perhaps 3 feet wide each. The road now sits at the bottom of a 15-to-20-foot-wide trench and gives the impression of a small grey ribbon laid at the bottom of a brown ditch: the contrast of sizes has left a seemingly indelible picture in my mind. “So this is Knossós.”

We took a “quick” (for me, not for them) tour of the palace in about an hour and a half, seeing the major points of interest in the Palace (including the pithos storerooms where so many tablets were found [**Ph 17**]),



and the immediately adjacent South House. Then we returned to Iraklion for supper and bed.

¶

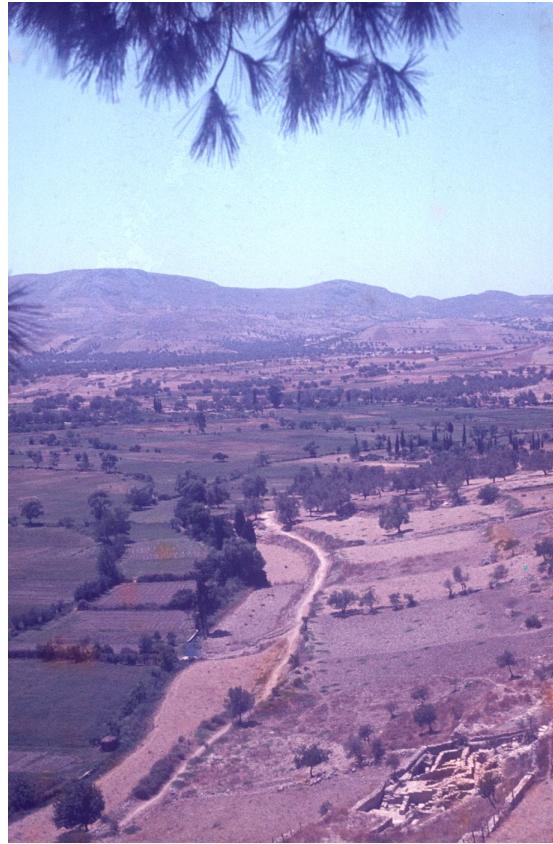
The Mesará

The next morning we hopped out bright and early for Phaistós, a rather long and arduous trip, since the road isn't too good (sort of like the one over Trail Creek Summit in Idaho, only not so washboardy). We had omitted to get our bus tickets the night before, so we were last on the list and therefore in the back of the bus—seats are numbered. Just as the bus was about to roll off, who should hop on but the Dutch girl, Ria, who had slept in the Hostel at Delphi with me and the English girl. So we talked for a while until seats began to empty up front and the conductor started moving the *xénes* (strangers) up front to better seats, one by one. I slid along the back bench into the corner where I could see out the window as soon as I had a chance, and the conductor didn't notice me. So I remained seated at the back—very happily since I had a window on the shady side and was directly behind the rear door where I could inspect the cut of the costumes by the old village men as they got off. I also remember wondering at the large, round, flat places I would occasionally see near the fields; I finally figured out that these were threshing floors—one of the places were people used to dance.

When the conductor finally noticed me, all the front seats were full, and he made motions of being very sorry. But I told him (in Greek, which surprised him) that I really didn't mind, since I had a window. One of the men on our back bench was busily getting out a whole big packet of fresh homemade cookies and passed them around to his immediate neighbors, and to the conductor and to me. So I took one—delicious: sort of a lady-finger-shaped shortbread with a touch of apricot jam cooked in. I was so obviously pleased by the taste that they all chuckled and made me take another one in my other hand, which I accepted when I saw he still had a lot left.

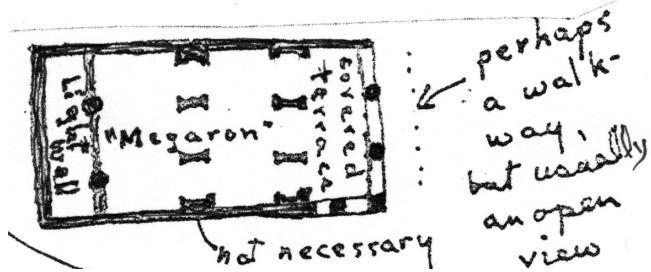
We finally reached Phaistos, the second largest Minoan palace, about 10:30; the bus would come back for us at 2:00—the only bus back. So we had only 3½ hours.

Phaistos is a lovely site, on a hill overlooking the Messará plain (the largest river valley and therefore largest agricultural area of Crete). Pines grow lushly on two sides, making sweet-smelling shade and soft rustles while one sits on the rocks overlooking the plain, including a blue-black pond below a spring in the side of the palace's hill. **[Ph 18]**



The live rock (*everything* seems to be a variety of limestone in Greece), black with white speckles, was cut back a bit on this side (also the top) of the knoll to form the corners of a couple of rooms of the “Minoan megaron” type of bedroom, which must have overlooked a very similar view in ancient times—perhaps wetter and not so deforested.

The Minoan megaron (so you won’t get confused) consists of the following basic features [Sk 8]:



The light-well, at the rear of the room, went up to a clerestory roof which provided light and air for all the rooms opening onto it. (Minoan palaces were clearly several stories high.) Therefore no room, other than a storeroom, was ever constructed more than one room away from such a “well” with its supply of air and daylight. The wells were set off by a small barricade ca. 2 feet high (just right for sitting on), with two or three columns

on top of this “bench” to support the roof beam. Inside, the large rooms of the living apartments were divided by the most easily spotted hallmark of ancient architecture: a row of doorjambs shaped like a serifed capital **I**. Each of the three blocks basing the stone jambs supported a vertical beam, and between each pair of jambs swung some sort of (folding?) door, which could be closed against winter cold or opened in summer to turn the whole suite into a vast shaded veranda. On the outer end, past the (last) set of folding doors was an always-open terrace, its roof supported by round Minoan columns (which taper *down*, not up!), with a square pier at the corner (if it turned a corner).

I’ve gone into such a lengthy description because I find it one of the most delightful styles of architecture ever invented. The Mycenaean megaron, by contrast, is simply two rooms and a porch—as at Mycenae, Tiryns, and Pylos [**Sk 9**]:



There are sometimes two or three of these folding-door halls in a Minoan palace—for king, queen, princes, perhaps. I remember two at Phaistos: the second now stares squarely into a thick clump of pines, but at one time overlooked the side-valley which joins the Messara lower down, just below Hagia Triada.



Scripta Minoa

Yes, Hágia Triáda, whence the one big archive of Linear A tablets. Now known to a certain IBM650 as HT. And also to a CDC1604. And to a whole stack of IBM cards. I saw an itty bitty sign for it pointing off into the wilderness just before we reached Phaistos. After we had combed Phaistos pretty thoroughly—it’s small compared to Knossos—Lynn (one of the other girls) and I decided to go to Hagia Triada in the remaining hour and a half. We each purchased a cold bottled beverage and λιγό ψωμί (“a little bread”—“How much bread?” “Uh, two drachmas’ worth”—to our surprise we got half a loaf!) to fortify ourselves, and we set out. Two kilometers, on foot, no bus, they had said: ’εκεί πέρα! (over there!) waving a hand toward the sea at the end of the ridge.

We went down the road a few hundred feet to the sign I had seen. It was slightly skewed and pointed mostly into the sky off the edge of what

seemed like a cliff. Closer inspection showed that a path existed and that only the first few feet were really steep. The rest was merely down a stiff slope, diagonally across a sheep pasture and then an olive grove. We looked doubtfully at each other, clutched our bread a little tighter, and set forth. What was our surprise, upon issuing out of the grove, to find ourselves on the road again! It had taken six hairpins while we crossed two fields. But we were also confronted with another Hagia Triada sign, this time pointing dubiously into a marsh. We paused to decide what that meant. It certainly did not mean the road, which swerved with great determination away from us to cross the little river. So we ruefully picked the only visible path, which followed the high ground just above the marshes at the base of our ridge, and hoped for the best.

The path averaged 8 inches in width—a mule trail. Above was a towering series of dry scrub-covered cliffs and below a green-black mass of marsh reeds, often ten to twenty feet tall, beyond which lay rich green and yellow fields. **[Ph 19]**



The reeds kept reminding me of a favorite Minoan vase painted with reeds. Often an ancient gnarled olive tree shaded our path; more often we were stopping to disentangle our skirts from the wild berry-bushes. It ranks as the most beautiful walk I've taken in Greece, and as one of the most beautiful anywhere. (That squushy meadow when we took the wrong road in the high Swiss Alps is the only one I think of, off hand, to beat it. The Etruscan city near Bologna, with its nightingales singing in the dusk, also matches it for beauty.)

We walked and walked. The path kept on. I was convinced that the site had to be on the other side of the ridge, from my memory of the plans. We walked some more. Finally we decided we could only walk ten more minutes, because we had to get back for the bus. But just about then, the cliff softened into a vine-clad saddle (the seat of Bacchus??) and we took heart as the path turned to cross it. We hit a path with a double track: "For excavation jeeps?" I mused aloud. "You spoke too soon," said Lynn, for the tracks stopped under an enormous olive tree just ahead.

"Then the site must be above us," I said. We clambered up a small slope, and presto! there it was, laid out before us like a map, the long row of cubicles of the ancient market forming a landmark in the sea of tall green weeds. A fresher breeze stirred the olives and pines, and we glanced toward its source. There to the left lay the sea, blue and sparkling, not more than a mile away. (You can't see the sea from Phaistos, precisely because of the intervening ridge we had hiked along.) I decided then and there that the Minoans take the cake for picking lovely sites to build on. My opinion has in no way altered after seeing other sites in Crete—each one is a gem, with Hagia Triada first and Gournia second. There isn't much else to say about such a place. You have to be there to understand. It is only a quarter the size of Phaistos, but the 20 minutes we had to see it weren't enough, of course, and we had to go back to catch the bus.

We were just leaving when an old man came clambering after us, asking if we had seen the tomb. No, we hadn't. He insisted on showing us; fortunately it was on our way back, a few dozen yards. We nodded at it knowingly and inspected it politely, and then said that we had to go so we wouldn't miss our bus. Why don't you let me bring my horse and donkey, and ride back? We finally agreed—we were sort of tired. It must have been $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles, not kilometers. But I couldn't quite figure out how many animals he was bringing. I knew γαῦδούρι was donkey (we could hear their preposterous noises now and then), and guessed from Latin *caballus* that καβάλλο was horse. But what ἄλογος was I had no idea. After a sizable

wait, during which we worried about our bus, a donkey and horse arrived. (I later ascertained that an ἄλογος is a horse, but καβάλλο means “riding” or “on horse/donkey-back”. Etymology doesn’t always work.)

I got onto the donkey, Lynn onto the horse. (Donkeys may stop, but they don’t run away, and Lynn had ridden horses a lot more than I had.) This saddle was wooden, like the Berbati one; but I had to ride a-straddle, not sideways this time. At Berbati I got a pain in my middle from the jouncing; here I got saddle-sore in the legs, instead, where the slats rubbed mercilessly, as well as roundly scratched by the brambles my animal delighted in walking through. The man was always thwacking him saying, “Στό δρόμο! Στό δρόμο!”—“On the *road*!” We finally got back at 1:58 to find our friends anxiously awaiting us at the bus stop.

“Hold the bus if it comes!” we said and, having paid the man, tore up the path to the tourist pavilion for a lemonade to revive us for the 2½ hour trip back to Iraklion. The bus was late, so we made it.

On the way back, all of a sudden, the bus pulled off to the side of the road in the middle of nowhere and the conductor announced “Ε’ίκοσι λεφτά!” (twenty minutes). We speculated as to whether this was for “women on one side of the bus, men on the other” (“looking at the scenery”). But when I asked the conductor, he explained it was to see Gortyna. So I explained in various languages to various baffled tourists that we had 20 minutes to see a nearby ancient site, and everyone piled out after the conductor. He led the way to a large ruined church—the first Christian bishopric in Crete—and then on through the weeds to a theater which looked Hellenistic except for some Roman-looking brickwork on the far side. This arched passageway was fenced and gated. After yelling to Kyria (Mrs.) Maria to come unlock it, the conductor led his throng to this arcade. Inside, written on the marble-faced back wall, were a whole series of inscriptions in Greek. “Laws” was the word floating on the mouths of the Greek-speakers. I wondered: Hellenistic like the theater? I scrutinized a line and discovered it was going “backwards”—right to left! The next line, however, went forwards. They alternated. Boustrophedon, it’s called—“as the ox turns” (when it ploughs, because it can’t fly back across the field to start the next furrow). Boustrophedon, as far as I know, wasn’t used after the mid-5th century BC, although the Minoans used it [provably on at least one extant inscription] in their first “hieroglyphic” script, pre-Linear A, nearly 2000 BC. Just then I heard the conductor saying something about the 6th century, so I figured my deductions were correct that this is about the earliest Greek law code extant.



North Coast to Gournia

The remainder of the trip was relatively uneventful. We rested a bit when we got back to Iraklion and then went to supper; after supper we went for a walk and stopped for Greek coffee and baklava. As we were going back towards the hotel I spotted Ria (the Dutch girl) sitting at supper at the Caprice restaurant on the corner of the big square with the old Venetian fountain. I went over to speak to her and who should be sitting at her table but Dee Haviland, whom I had made a futile attempt to locate earlier that afternoon. Dee is a grad student in archaeology at Bryn Mawr and was warden of Radnor when I was a junior; Miss Mellink had told me Dee was working on thesis material in Iraklion. It turned out that Dee had an extra bed in her room at a pension; so we arranged to meet for breakfast, and she would take my bag if it was OK with the pension lady for me to share her room. (She needed to go to Athens, and if I could pay the rent for her room while she was gone, cheap though it was, she'd have enough money to go.) Then Ria and I were to go to Gournia together—my other friends were all leaving the next morning anyhow.

And thus it happened. Dee took my bag and gave me the address, and I scrambled off to meet Ria at the bus station. As usual, having gotten our tickets late, we sat at the rear of the bus. But we didn't mind. The sea coast was so gorgeous, we forgot the bouncing around. There is surf in Crete! It's not the placid Aegean lake I'd seen going to Mykonos; and what a gorgeous blue-green! Until Mällia, we passed broad sandy beaches; then we swerved into the hills to cross the northern foothills of Mt. Dikte to reach the Gulf of Mirabello at Hagios Nikólaos. We had gotten almost to the pass, climbing slowly up the face of a steep gorge when the road wid- [“widened”, I mean: the window just slammed, and the yellow spot below the word “just” is a squashed-bug-spot] and the bus stopped. “Πέντε λεφτά!” (five minutes) said the conductor. Ria and I hopped out like old hands and followed the crowd. This time we found a small white chapel, not very old. I found out later from Dee that it is considered bad luck for the vehicle which doesn't stop there. Soon we reached Hagios Nikólaos. Ria and I took advantage of the half-hour layover to get bottled lemonades and finish her currant-rolls. (On the way back we got lemonades and ate my cookies.) We also walked for a few minutes along the bit of pine-shaded shore below the bus station, admiring the green of the reeds against the azure blue of the water.

I had thought the Mallia coast lovely: the Gulf of Mirabello from Hagios Nikolaos to Pachyámmos (literally “thick sand”) is more beautiful

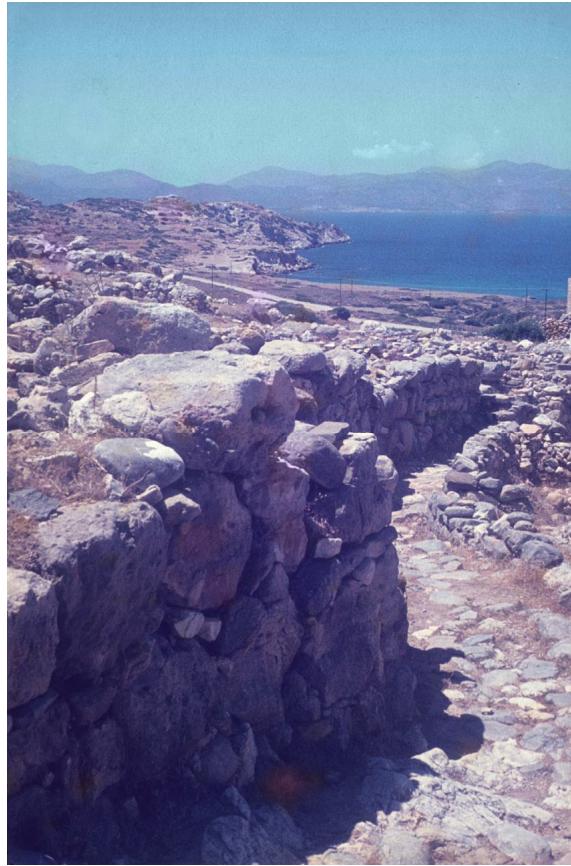
than any coast I've ever seen, save perhaps Carmel and parts of Oregon. Miss Lang later asked me if it was as beautiful as she remembered, and I couldn't help replying with an immediate and emphatic "Yes!"

Goúrnia is just west of Pachyammos, on a hillside—a knoll—overlooking a small turquoise bay surrounded by yellow and black rocks on three sides and by a navy-blue sea on the far side. And there's the site, all of a sudden, neat and clear and rather small as you come around the bend: a whole little Minoan trading town draped over a round hillock like a checked cloth laid over a pie. [Ph 20]



The walls stand 2 to 6 feet high and the steep little streets are 3 to 4 feet wide. [Ph 21-22] I was glad I'd seen Mykonos first—it helped me feel what it would have been like for the Minoans. As with Hagia Triada, you must wait for the pictures: again it defies words.





The guard was very friendly and insisted on showing us everything himself. I translated into English for Ria; he knew only a few words of English and about as much German. He showed us doorposts and mortars with their pestles; little stairways and Mycenaean pavements. Finally he made us come down and sit on the unfinished-but-shady veranda of the tourist-pavilion-to-be while we waited for our bus, and served us each a chunk of *karpoúzi*, a melon that looks like a watermelon inside and out but is more the size and shape of a bowling ball. The bus had left us off at 11:30 and the last one back came by around 1:30.

At one point he leapt up and plucked a large sprig off of a nearby shrub, a very small shrub with purple flowers. He handed part to me and part to Ria for us to smell, with the comment “Θυμάρι!” which my nose immediately translated as thyme. (Hmm: waiting for the bus with thyme on my hands...) That launched a discussion of food and flowers, which eventually wound up with honey. The guard must have been a honey-lover: he described the entire honey situation in Crete before he finished. The gist of it was that the best honey came from thyme flowers; that it was more expensive but worth it; and that Siteía, a town near the east end of the island, was the best place to procure it. It cost about 20 to 25 Δρ a kilo. Since he

seemed to know East Crete like the palm of his hand, I asked him about getting to the little island of Mokhlós and received detailed instructions: what village to take the bus to, then to walk 7 km from there to the coast, to hire a rowboat there to reach the island across a narrow channel. It sounded pretty unworkable for me.

Finally the bus came and we departed for Iraklion, where I inquired my way to the address Dee had given me and found the house. The door was open and I saw a pretty young woman of 25 or so, dressed in black, who said in slow, careful English that I must be Dee's friend. I said yes, and she bade me come upstairs. She asked if I spoke French, and when I said yes, she gave a big sigh of relief and proceeded to speak French (which she spoke quite well) henceforward. I think she must have been figuring out her two sentences of English all day, from the size of her relief. She showed me where everything was and I lay down to nap until Dee came in. Dee had said she had a date that evening, so I had agreed to eat with Ria at a place called the Glass House. But when Ria and I walked in, who should we run into but Dee and friend—a guy named Phil from the American airforce base nearby. So we ate together anyway.

I forgot to mention the Glass House earlier. I had gone there with my other acquaintances the first night in Iraklion, and what was my surprise when half way through the meal the rather loud and poor band gave place to five Cretans in native costume: two musicians and three dancers! So of course I took every available opportunity thereafter to return. They gave two half-hour performances, at 9:30 and 11:30. But the repertoire each night was always the same, only in a different order, so I stayed for both only this once (with Ria, Dee, and Phil) since it was so late already.

I won't describe the dances here—I wrote them down, steps and all, as I ate and watched. I'll only give a few impressions of the performers. One of the two male dancers—the less good—looked, however, like a true Minoan to me: tall, slim, wasp-waisted, with a slight tendency to being swaybacked, and short dark curls. The woman had little to do—merely a supporting partner sometimes. But the other man had in his eye the same light of concentration and preoccupation with dancing that I sometimes think I must have when I reflect on how engrossed I get. And like me he wasn't *that* good a dancer—just enthused enough to throw his entire self into it anyway. He had an excellent sense of rhythm and never lost the beat (as the other one did) when doing fancy variations—even when he jumped up on a nearby table and started dancing on top of someone's empty beer bottle, at one point. That was quite something. One of the two musicians—the one playing the tune on a raucous little fiddle called a *lyra*—seemed to have

private eye-communication with the better dancer, and every time this dancer would try something new or get foiled by the music or something, this fiddler would grin from ear to ear in great good humor. Soon the grin would die away as he got wrapped up in his tune again. The other musician never cracked a smile: he simply sat surveying the scene serenely as he plucked away on his instrument. (The only other Minoan-looking person I've seen here, besides the tall dancer, was a little girl getting off the bus with her family in a mountain village on the way to Phaistos: she looked remarkably like a Minoan painting of a curly-headed girl, nicknamed *La Parisienne*—only this little girl had *blonde* curls, not black ones!)



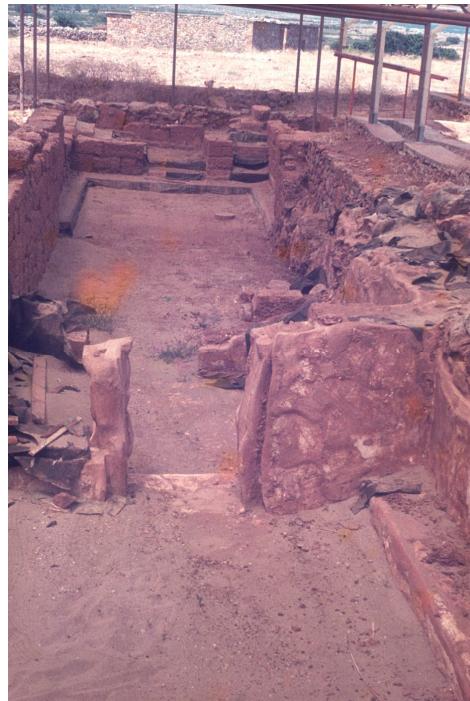
Mallia

The next day Ria and I went to Mallia, the third great Minoan palace after Knossos and Phaistos. We took the first bus out at 9:30, getting there about 10:30. We were informed that the only other bus that came out to the excavations would be there at 1:00, although buses left every two hours from the village 3½ km away. So we wandered about the palace [Ph 23]



until we had seen everything, and then found some recent excavations over in the NW corner. These had laid bare a small series of rooms covered with reddish stucco—walls, floor, built-in benches, steps, etc., all stuccoed. I had never seen anything like it and guessed it must be pre-Middle Minoan II

(MM II), a conclusion later verified by a pit at Knossos with similar remains labeled exactly that: “pre-MM II”. No one ever told me about *them*. [Ph 24]



About 12:15 we were quite done and decided to go down to the nearby beach—the palace was ocean-front property—where Ria could wash her feet in the surf and I could try to find the Minoan villa supposedly excavated there. Both objectives were realized; but as we turned around to go back, we saw an enormous black thundercloud descending rapidly from the peaks of Dikte. So we hurried back to the main site and sat down to wait for the bus, due in five minutes. We had waited some 10 minutes when the guard came out and told us we'd have to walk into town because it wouldn't bother to come out to the site to bring tourists with this rain brewing. So we walked back the 3½ km. Fortunately it didn't rain—only a few drops here and there. The whole way was lined with peach orchards and little banana plantations, dotted by occasional water-pumping windmills. We ate lunch in the town and caught the 3:00 bus back. We said goodbye then and exchanged addresses: Ria was going on to Rhodes the next day and from there to Turkey, so we knew we wouldn't be bumping into each other again.

I ate dinner with Dee at her favorite restaurant (the Glass House was “too touristy” for her), where we had excellent *souvlakia* (shish kebab) and something Dee loves called *zadziki*—a Turkish dish consisting of raw garlic and cucumber minced up into yogurt. It tasted good, though a bit too garlicky for me.

And for my stomach—I was sick again the next morning. The girl who helped her mother run the pension was very concerned and brought me tea to settle my stomach and later rice boiled with no salt and flavored with a touch of lemon (known as *λαπάζ*), the Greek cure for diarrhea. It works; by evening I felt alive again. Sunday Dee left for Athens for “a few days” to do some work there and make home-going arrangements; so I had the room to myself. I went to the museum for a couple of hours (it takes time to digest a whole building full of Minoan art and artifacts!), and otherwise laid low.

¶

Courting

In the evening the “pension” girl—Elli—asked me if I would like to go sit in the main square for a little while with herself and her friend Natassa and meet some of their friends; so I agreed to go, it being another excellent opportunity to be with Greeks, and I really liked Elli. (Her father had been a fisherman but was killed in a storm almost a year ago—hence her wearing black. But the year was almost up, so she was busily sewing a new outfit in black and white, which she was allowed to wear the second year of mourning.) People say the Greeks are so *philoxenoi* “stranger-loving”; and they are in many ways. And yet in many ways there is a much bigger and tougher wall between me and them than in any other country to which I have been. But I haven’t been able to sort out my thoughts on the matter into anything coherent yet, so I’ll leave it be for a while.

As I began to discover, this was the regular entertainment of an ordinary Greek girl: to take a walk or sit sipping lemonade with girlfriends in the square, where she can meet eligible young men. In Iraklion, the girls sit and the young men make the rounds—a limonada here, an ouzo there, moving from one open-air café to the next, scoping out the girls. Elli had very distinguished friends—mostly doctors and lawyers, well educated and intelligent, often knowing two, three, or four languages. We spoke Greek until I would get lost, then they rescued me sometimes in English (of which Natassa knew some) but more often in French (since Elli spoke it so well). One of their friends, who arrived while Elli and I were speaking French, would hardly believe I was American: “I knew you weren’t French, but I never heard an American speak French so well,” he said in Greek. (He hasn’t heard my sister, I thought. More recompense for the struggle of being flung into French schools at age 12.) They all kindly complimented me on my Greek, of course, and I was asked as usual how I learned it. I told them about having studied ancient Greek, and about practicing Modern Greek

with Katia and Betsey. This is my usual reply, and I have in due course worked out the vocabulary and grammar of this topic so well that people who ask me that question first think I speak Greek perfectly and are astonished when I can scarcely understand another word they say! (That used to happen to me in Strasbourg, too: it's the "I speak but can't understand" level.)

On our way home, as we passed the Caprice Restaurant, who should be standing on the corner but Miss Mellink. Since my companions had just met another friend, I excused myself momentarily to say hello and tell her that Dee had just gone to Athens, among other things to find her. I ran into her again at the Museum on Monday, just as it was closing for lunch, so we ate together, exchanging bits of archaeological news. It was here that I found out more about the Neolithic Anatolian site that I described many pages ago: it is called Çatal Hüyük.

The late afternoon I spent in the Historical Museum (whence the postcard to Mama) which had several rooms of costumes and embroidery, a room set up as a country house, and a room devoted to Nikos Kazandzakis—the Cretan national writer, I guess you'd say.

¶

Spelunking; Little Princesses

Tuesday morning I caught the 9:30 Mallia bus so as to go to the Cave of Eileithuia, 7 km east of town. As I got off the bus in the middle of nowhere, a very concerned voice in the front of the bus said in English with a thick accent, "Do you know where you're going? Don't get lost now!"

"I'm going to the Cave of Eileithuia," I said.

The voice conferred hastily in Greek with the conductor, then he shouted to me as the bus rolled off, "Up by the bridge—by the bridge!" I thanked him. I had also noticed a very American-looking woman sitting beside him.

I headed off up the side road labeled Episkopi, but I didn't see any bridges, only several large culverts, one for each hairpin turn in the road. So I walked, keeping my eyes open for a sign, or signs of caves. After two large hairpins I came upon a roadworking team, so I asked the director—distinguishable by his clean white trousers—if he knew where the cave was. He said that around the very next bend I would see a little sign on the left. So I proceeded—but not without company. A girl my age, clad in blue jeans, appeared out of nowhere and followed me to the sign. There was no arrow, so I didn't know whether to go up or down hill; but she motioned me

to follow her downhill, and within a few yards we came to the cave entrance, almost hidden by the only tree on the hill, some 100 feet from the largest of the culverts. [Ph 25]



You know what dark is? Dark is coming into a deep cave out of the blindingly bright Aegean sun. We went in together—she said she had never been inside but had been curious to do so. It was less scary that way. Not that I was scared of hobgoblins or even of the numerous bats, but of the slippery and extremely uneven floor, with pits and pools and so forth. We knew we'd have help if one of us fell. I had brought a candle Dee had partly used up for similar purposes, so that served as light; my tiny flashlight was uselessly small. What one needs is a train conductor's lamp like "Uncle" Lou's! We wandered around in the drippy dark for a while, dodging involuntarily every time a bat whisked by. We didn't go clear to the back of the cave, which was also the bottom. We were already skorching through mud, getting damper by the minute, and feeling that the rest probably looked like what we'd already seen. So we turned around and came back up. By then our eyes were used to the dark and we were able to see much better, with the aid of the light from the mouth of the cave. We now could make out a series of walls around a central stalagmite coming up from the floor, probably the sanctuary walls. I wished I'd read the excavation reports—I'd read the reports from the other three famous caves: Dikte, Ida, and Kamares. But that's the way the cookie crumbles—or should I say, the pot breaks?

I had to wait another hour for the next bus, so she and the workmen insisted that I eat lunch with them: bread, canned sardines, and hard-boiled eggs. Then I descended to the road for the bus, with a few minutes to spare.

A farm woman standing by the road said I'd better go into the village a few hundred yards down the way to catch it, however. I was intending to ride it farther on out to Amnissos, the port town for Knossos, and to Nirou Khani, which I had been given to understand were quite close to each other. But I must have misunderstood, because around the next bend I spied a small sign pointing to the coast, a hundred yards away, saying *Amnissos*. I looked that direction and saw a very small group of ruins huddled up by a rocky point. Just then the bus pulled into sight, so I made a fast decision to skip Amnissos, since it looked so small, and continue on to Nirou Khani another 7 or 8 km down the road, at the village of Kokkini ("red").

I told the conductor in my best Greek I wanted to be let off at Kokkini. Where?? I said it again: Kokkini. A firestorm of Greek erupted, everyone within earshot on the bus offering an opinion as to where I meant. Finally I fished the slip of paper out of my purse where it was written—Κοκκίνη—and showed it to them. With a single voice they all said, "Ah, *KoCHIni!!*" Cretan dialect. I guess that goes along with their pronouncing "okhi" ("no") as "oshi". Oh yes: and in Crete, I discovered, I come from *AmeriCHI*.

Nirou Khani was also very small, but very pleasant. It was not more than 30 feet from the surf, measured at a 45° angle down the slope. Surrounded by iceplant and shaded by several olive trees, it presented a nice green oasis to the eye. This little villa is supposed from the finds to have been a center of export of Minoan religious objects to the rest of the Aegean. However that may be, I was sitting in the shade comparing the site with my plan of it when a motor-scooter zoomed up, and the guard and his four-year-old daughter climbed off of it. The guard grinned and nodded at me and went into his house, while his little daughter (Rena was her name) wandered over and stood beside me clutching her bunch of grapes. After surveying me wide-eyed for a few minutes, she finally held out the grapes to me. I took a few and she skipped off.

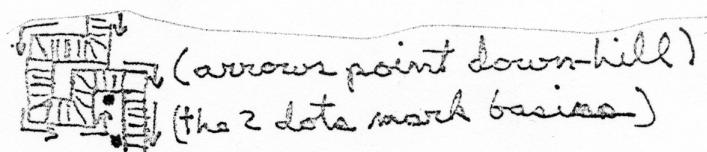
I went down and sat on the beach after I'd gone over the site thoroughly. Mama!! I've never seen such a pile of gorgeous rocks! Round cobbles, six inches to a foot in diameter, with multicolored bands running through them, like Agate Beach magnified! I would have brought you some, or one even, except they were all *so* big. The early Minoans used to make stone vases out of them, picking rocks that rivaled the "marbling" of a 19th-century book binding—but this is real marble, or at least limestone, not dyestuff. I am quite convinced that the nature of the Cretan seashore gave the Minoans their peculiar sense of undulating color that set them off from the rest of the ancient world.

I finally sat down on the chair-and-table-strewn veranda of the roadside café with a limonada to wait for the bus. Presently an old man came out and sat down at the next table. He wore Cretan baggy pants, tall white boots, and a typical Cretan headband folded from a black net in such a way that the tiny tassels along its edge hang down across the forehead like so many Minoan curls. (I bought one of those netted headbands in Iraklion, after much hunting.) He had a craggy, weatherbeaten face behind an enormous pepper-and-salt handlebar mustache. He looked very fierce, though entirely at repose. Moments later the glass door opened again and out tripped a little girl of about four with a head of blonde curls and clutching some sort of breadstuff. As she headed, giggling, for what were clearly Grandpa's knees and began to climb aboard, his face broke out into a smile of pure delight that I shall never forget: Beauty and the Beast, adoring each other.

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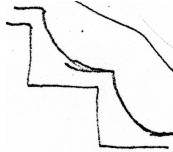
Grapes of Wrath; Retreats

The following day I returned to Knossos, Dee's copy of Pendlebury's guide firmly in hand. I spent a charming 3½ hours going through the palace stone by stone. By the time I finished the palace, it was very hot and unshady, so I didn't go to any of the peripheral buildings then. The farthest I went was to the northeast bastion with its flight of stairs leading into the ravine to the east. The staircase is fantastic; rather, its drainage system is, for it carried away extra water—probably fresh water—from the palace. Because of the nature of the slope, the stairway has to double back on itself. [Sk 10]



In order to bring the water down, they wanted to make a small conduit or channel on one side. But the water has to turn six corners, which gets pretty messy on an inside corner: the water, if coming fast, would jump the side of the channel and flood the step. So instead of building a channel with a straight floor diagonally from top to bottom (in which case the water would pick up more and more speed all the way down to the corner) or making the water run horizontally the width of the tread and then fall (which would stop its forward momentum, but then create splash as well as wear and tear on the

stone), they carefully carved a parabolic curve in the channel for each step [Sk 11],



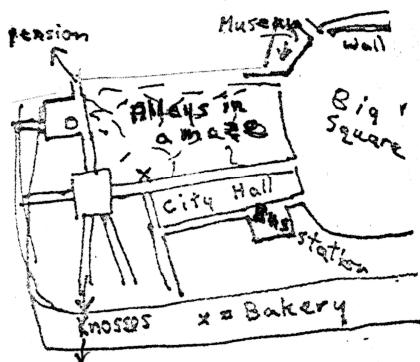
which led the water at constant speed and without splash from corner to corner! Can you beat that?? Near the bottom, where the path flattens out for a ways, the water was led into two successive basins. Evans wondered if they did their wash in these basins. But they are far too small for the palace laundry, and with far too little water. My theory, as someone who grew up in a hot climate where water is precious, is that this was a little pleasure garden where you could come and sit in the afternoon, shaded by the tall bastion wall to the west of you, listening to the gentle plashing of the water as it came down the channel and perhaps enjoying the sight of lilies and tiny fish in the little pools.

Back in Iraklion, just past noon, as I walked to my pension by my usual route, I got a craving for a delicious sort of roll with raisins in it which I've found only in the islands. So I decided to go a half block out of my way to the only bakery I knew of. But when I got to the street it was on—one of the main streets—I noticed an unusually big crowd of people standing around in it. Now, in Greece people don't walk on the sidewalks. They walk in the streets. Hence it is not unusual to see lots of people standing or walking in the street. But I sensed immediately a difference this time. Something was wrong. I wondered for a moment whether to proceed to the bakery, decided it was probably an accident of some sort, and therefore not something to be wary of. And I was curious. So I walked among all the people until I got to the bakery. What was my surprise to see the baker busily pulling down his rolling shutters and locking his door—at 12:15, yet! Shops usually close at 1:00. Then I noticed all the other stores and cafés (which almost *never* close) doing the same. I turned around and began to walk back a little sheepishly. Just then a loud horn tooted from the next little alley, and people scattered out of the street as a large truck roared out of the side street and off down the road. Through the open rear end I caught sight of six or eight policemen sitting in the back of the truck. Oops, I thought, riots. We leave, and we leave *γρήγορα* (fast). So I left—I went to the pension, far away in a quiet residential quarter, and waited it out with a nap.

When I issued forth at 4:30 to go to the museum, I met Elli in the hall. “Avez-vous vu notre petite bataille?” [Have you seen our little battle?] she

asked. I replied that I had gathered something was wrong but had decided it was safer not to stay to find out what it was, being a foreigner. She explained that the farmers who grew grapes had come into Iraklion to demonstrate against the lowering of the price of grapes bought by the government. These farmers are very poor and farm on credit from the bank. So the bank takes one drachma back per kilo of grapes sold. When the government slashed the price from 4 to $3\Delta p$ /kilo, it cut the farmers' earnings from 3 to $2\Delta p$ /kilo—a $1/3$ cut in income is not easy to take, especially when in debt already. The farmers, consequently, had come to protest and to negotiate for a better price. Somewhere along the line something happened, though. Elli said that the farmers decided to take reprisals; I heard from another source that their delegation to negotiate had been barred from the city hall. At some point the police began shooting over the heads of the crowd; crossfire began immediately. Elli said three villagers and a policeman were killed; but the papers made no mention of casualties. So either Elli was mistaken—perhaps they were only wounded—or else the government covered up the results of their refusal to negotiate peacefully. I can't judge because I'm sure I don't know all the facts.

As I entered the museum I noticed a large crowd on the other side of *that* square and a few policemen lurking at a discreet distance from the museum (300 yards, I'd say). Everything was quiet, however. When I emerged at 6:00 with Miss Mellink, the gate of the tall museum fence had been shut protectively and armed troops surrounded the square. [Sk 12]



The crowd in front of what Miss Mellink informed me was the city hall was bigger and buzzing noisily. We retired through the maze of alleys to the Knossos bus station as we discussed the riots.

“Oh, I was sitting in the square eating an ice cream when all this started,” said Miss Mellink nonchalantly. “And then there was some shooting. I went back to the museum and they had shut the gates. People

would come up and knock to be let in behind the fence. The guards would look and if it was a tourist they'd let him in, and if it was a rioter, they'd say, 'No, you stay out!' When I was eating my ice cream, there was an American father there telling his children that this sort of thing didn't happen in America—we always settle things peacefully. I felt like breaking in and setting father straight; but I decided I'd better let him bring up his children his own way."

She's amazing.

She saw me off on the bus to Knossos, and it was as if that—not June graduation—was our goodbye. In fact I never even said goodbye in June. There wasn't time. Four remarkable years of living in perpetual fixation on her and Miss Lang are over. I adored Mrs. [Prof. Brunilde] Ridgway (who was always finding ways to help us with the curriculum), and Mr. [Prof. Richmond] Lattimore too (who was so shy that we had to dig the really interesting stuff out of him), but in different ways; Mellink and Lang held me in thrall. It has been so interesting seeing both of them in the context of their research rather than only at school. In your letter of July 11 you asked why I didn't hit Mylonas up for a job at Mycenae. The reason was that Jean had written him for one previously and had been told he didn't want any more people. But I'm still kicking myself for not staying longer at Pylos. It was so wonderful there.

I wanted to go back to Knossos again to see the periphery, not just the palace. So I hopped off the bus one stop early, which landed me at the gate to the "Little Palace"—a nice *locked* gate. Pursuant to the instructions of some man sitting in the café there, I walked down to the main entrance of the Knossos site, showed my archaeological pass, and asked for the key. Which, to my surprise, was handed over without question. (I've never mentioned that in Athens I had been able to procure an "archaeology student" pass with a pretty little picture of a girl from a Greek vase on the front, plus my own photo and name inside, which lets me into all archaeological sites and museums either free or at a reduced rate.)

So I trotted back, let myself in, and had a pleasant solitary tour of said edifice. Returning the key, I received instructions for getting to the so-called Caravanserai, or Minoan roadside inn, across the southern ravine from the palace beside the ancient road to Knossos from the south. This was not fenced, so I needed no key. Access was to be had merely by clambering down through a vineyard and over a stream—the one that formerly supplied the inn's bath. **[Ph 26]**



Seeing it in person, I'd call it a foot-wash, and perhaps that's all it really was. The place is utterly charming, especially in the twilight, which is when I was there. The cicadas still chirrup in the vineyard, the evening star shines out brightly in the dull red-grey of the west, the wind rustles the pines on the opposite slope over the remains of the Palace of Minos... I'm where I want to be.

Slap! The Caravanserai pool merely breeds mosquitoes, nowadays. I had about two dozen bites when I tore myself away at 8 o'clock, after stopping to talk to a girl who turned out to have graduated in June in Classics from Swarthmore. I ate a rather poor supper in the village there, and then returned to the beleaguered city. A crowd still milled in the square, but it was much smaller and quieter, and quite gone when I caught the bus for Hierápetra the next morning.

¶

Hierapetra

For the third time I passed along the splendid coast of the Gulf of Mirabello, past Mallia and Hagios Nikolaos, past Gournia, and across the little isthmus to the south coast, to Hierapetra. Leaving my carpet-bag at the station (it was about 1:30), I headed off for the little museum in the 3½ hours before the bus left for Siteía. I bought a hunk of bread on the way (since

everything else was closed except the cafés), asking a policeman for directions. He showed me the way, but told me it was closed until 4:00, which I should have guessed. So I sat down at a café and ordered a limonada from the young man who emerged to wait on me. He sat down nearby while I drank it and presently struck up a conversation—which made me nervous on principle. We chatted for a bit (all this in Greek of course), and then I excused myself to go walk on the beach. It was a lovely curving black beach of pea-sized pebbles. An elderly businessman—the kind of Greek I most enjoy talking with—soon began a conversation with me as he busily dumped pebbles on his wet midriff. A crowd of little boys gradually collected, until finally the group received as its last member none other than the young man from the café. He had been relieved of duty by his Papa and had come to find me. (Choke.)

About this time the businessman had to go, so I was stranded with an offer of lemonade by the young man. And he wanted me to meet his sister. And his mother. So we strolled a couple of blocks to his home, where I met his sister and parents. They insisted I sit down on their shady veranda with them and served me *γλυκή* (*glyki* as in *glucose*), a very sweet fruit preserve on a little dish, plus a little shot-glass of ouzo—apparently the usual refreshments offered to a guest. The cherry preserves were delicious, but the ouzo was a problem. I tasted it politely—I knew it would taste like anise, which was fine with me. But they kept looking at me expectantly. I took another tiny little sip. Still looking. Another tiny sip. “Don’t you like it?” “It’s very nice!” More funny looks. Finally they explained to me that one was supposed to down the whole glass at a single gulp. I had to explain as best I could, as I tried to take a few more little sips, that I wasn’t accustomed to drinking anything high in alcohol. By this time it was 4:00 PM, so I said I had to go. Oh no—not alone! Brother and sister accompanied me. The museum keeper had overslept on his siesta and wasn’t there yet, so brother left for his duties at the café while sister and I waited. The museum proved to consist of one middle-sized room, with its chief item of interest plopped down in the middle: a large clay Late Minoan sarcophagus which looked as if it were trying to be a chariot crater (a large Mycenaean mixing-bowl decorated with crudely drawn scenes of chariot processions). It is the only one known with human figures on it and was what I came there to see for myself. I was informed that I couldn’t take a picture of it, so I started writing a verbal description; and the guard—afraid, I guess, that it would take all day—finally said to go ahead and take a photo. Which I did.

¶

Siteia

The bus to Siteia was marvelous, a lovely drive on a dreadful road, until it got too dark to see. Along the road before sunset we stopped at two “traditional” stops (as well as at each village) on the steep slopes of what I was told was Mt. Thriptí. One was for physical food—souvlakia—the other for spiritual food—a chapel of a saint whose festival (I was told) was the following day. A little after sunset, a man got on and sat down beside me, and soon began to talk. He, it seemed, was a bus driver on the route between Siteia and Zakro, one of the places I wanted to go. (They recently discovered a fourth Minoan palace there.) He eventually managed to convey to me the information that the bus left for Zakro at 5:30 PM and returned at 5:30 AM—which is to say, it is designed for farmers coming into the market town (Siteia) in the morning, doing their business, and returning to their village at night. To go there myself I would have to stay somewhere, somehow, out in the village for two nights; and I only had one night left before I had to return to Iraklion. The other place I wanted to see—Palaikastro—was serviced by the same bus.

This information, unobtainable in Iraklion (I had asked), was more than faintly discouraging. In Siteia there was no site and no museum. Even more discouraging when I stepped off the bus and found there was no room in the nearest hotel. The off-duty bus driver said he’d help me find one, though, and guided me to the second of the town’s three hotels. No room. So we hiked a number of blocks uphill to the third—and hooray there was one single room left! The elderly couple who ran it were very nice too—they treated me sort of like a grandchild. I dumped my stuff and departed to find supper—to the quai, at their suggestion.

Siteia is built like half a bowl around a little harbor which functions as the center of town. The first restaurant I came to was rather large, and some boys started shouting, “Tourista, tourista!” at me so I went on by. At the second place the proprietor told me rather surlily that he had no more room. So I went on. The last place, at the end of the quai, was quite small, but there were several empty tables. I asked what they had to serve, ordered, and sat down. I heard them talking about me inside: “Foreigner.” “Does she speak Greek?” “A little—not much.” “Tourists, tourists.”

I can’t say I had much appetite for supper by this time, though the souvlakia were good. As I walked back up toward my hotel I received a few calls of “tourist!” after me and a falsetto “Do you spik Engleesh?” followed by gales of young male laughter. I was so exasperated by this that I missed my turn, which I soon realized. I stopped and turned back, to find a family

of three watching me from the previous corner. They sensed that I was lost, and I in turn sensed *that*. So I asked them in my best Greek where the hotel was, and they said they had guessed I was lost and promptly sent their son with me as guide—it was only a block out of their way home. The young men with the falsetto happened out of a side alley again and followed me (now “us”) the last block, making rude remarks about me and tourists in Greek. So at the door to the hotel, I turned and said “Καλλή νύχτα!” (good night) loudly with my most careful Greek accent to my young guide. The laughter stopped as they realized I could understand them.

I thought as I crawled into bed how good it was that this had happened, to take the bad taste out of my mind before I went to sleep: one honest family’s kindness against the thoughtlessness of a number of their countrymen. I wonder why anti-tourism has been so particularly a problem way out here, so far from Iraklion with its airport and big docks?

¶

Thyme on my hands

The next morning I decided I might as well return to Hagios Nikolaos to see what I could see around there, since it was impossible to do anything at Siteia. The later of the two buses per day left at 11:30, so I had the morning. For what purpose? Why, to hunt for wild thyme honey, of course.

I ambled about for a while, trying to decide what sort of a store would sell this commodity. Finally I saw a shop with various bottled and canned foodstuffs. It was labeled **ΠΑΝΤΟΠΟΛΕΙΟΝ** (“all-seller”), so I went in and asked hopefully for honey. Honey? Honey? No, we don’t sell honey; in fact that is very difficult to find. Did they have any suggestions? Well, there was one man he thought might have some—his errand boy was going that direction and would show me the way. The errand boy presently emerged to receive explicit instructions, and we departed, the boy pushing a large green cart.

As on Pandrosou Street in Athens, the little shops lining the street we came to looked to me like small concrete cubicles, all the same size, sharing party-walls with their neighbors on each side—not all that different from the ancient “market” at Hagia Triada or the reconstructed stoa in the Agora (“market”) in Athens. Like a row of square caves. The front wall of each was a roll-down shutter, much like those in Germany and parts of France; but in those countries the shutter came down in front of the front window or wall and door; here there is no front wall. Shutter rolled up—shop’s open; shutter rolled down, it’s closed.

Unfortunately I don't recall what sort of sign the "honey-man" had, but he seemed to deal in large quantities of various grains and oil. Large bulging sacks, square wooden bins, and great vats with spigots sat on the floor along the walls all the way to the back. I asked the merchant, a middle-aged man with a large handlebar mustache, if he had honey, and he said yes. I asked how much; he said 22 Δρ/kilo. So I said I wanted some and he said what are you going to put it in?

Blink.

Well, I said, you don't have any containers? No. I'll bring one, I ventured, but I don't know how heavy honey is. Heavy, he replied. About how "big" would a kilo be?? He showed me with his hands. I took my temporary leave and bought a plastic bottle from a merchant I had seen around the corner—the sort of sturdy bottle they use here as drinking-water bottles. I took it back to the hotel, washed it thoroughly with detergent, packed my carpet-bag, checked out (it was now 10:30), and returned to the honey cave.

The man took the bottle, sniffed it to make sure it was fresh, and after nodding approvingly, plopped it into one of the balance pans of his scale. Then he reached over to a nearby bin of dried beans, shoveled up a scoop-full, and sifted them into the opposite pan until they balanced my bottle. Carrying the bottle to the back of the store—I was still in the dark as to where he kept the honey—he began to unscrew a screw at the bottom of an enormous metal vat on the shelf. The screw released a metal plate which itself turned on a screw at one edge, so that by sliding the metal plate he could uncover as much or as little of the spigot mouth as he wanted and so control the size of the stream.

A stream of thick, clear, golden-brown honey. Need more be said?

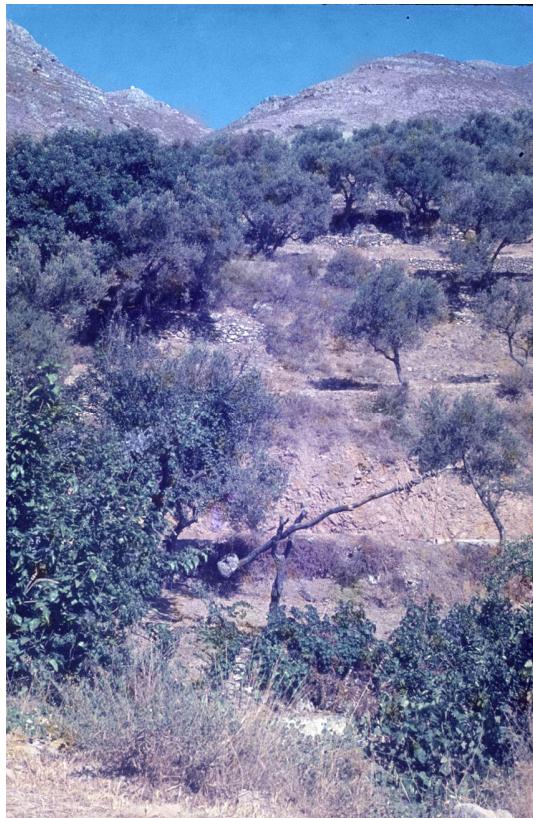
Yes: that it was *thyme* honey—very heavy in flavor, very "wild", very dark in color. It came to about 1 1/4 kilos when it was full. I paid him, thanked him, and lugged off my prize. He must have thought I was crazy. He had a lovely grey mustache.

In my last 45 minutes I tried to find a striped bag like the handsome ones everyone there had; but it was impossible, because they never make those to sell. They make such junk for the tourists. If they only made for tourists what they make for themselves, they'd sell twice as much. Their "peasant" taste is much better than their pseudo-sophisticate taste. (Gee, I'm full of lectures today!)

The bus trip back to Hagios Nikolaos was lovely in the daylight; I hadn't seen much the night before. For once the seat number written on my ticket proved to be a window seat; but a woman had ensconced herself in it

and refused to give it to me (proving once again that *philoxenia*, Greek or otherwise, is an entirely individual matter). I heard her muttering to the woman behind something about the *xeni* (foreign girl) who doesn't understand. But I let it pass in silence. I moved to the back of the bus as soon as a family got off, and had more bumps but more of a view. (I didn't mind giving her the window if she wanted to look out, but she slept the entire way.)

I particularly wanted to see out because I had noticed something on the way east that I wanted to try to get a photo of in the daylight heading west. This was a contraption known as a shadoof in Egypt—both ancient and modern Egyptians use(d) them to raise water from the Nile. It consists of a long pole balanced on an upright, with a rope and bucket on the front end and a large stone as a counterweight lashed to the back end. The trick is to position the pole so it will be balanced when the pail is full. The operator lowers the bucket into a well (or the Nile), fills the bucket, raises it, then swings it to one side and empties it into an irrigation ditch or whatever, and does it again. The bus lumbered so slowly down the bumpy dirt road that I had plenty of time to snap a picture. It forms sort of a portrait of Cretan agriculture: olive groves above the road, vineyards below, and a device to scrounge water from the land between them on a steep and rocky slope. [Ph 27]



We stopped at the usual places: everyone for miles round was picnicking at the chapel—it was now the saint's feast day. The souvlakia stop came next, and after everyone piled out, I seated myself on the bus's step to take a picture off the cliff, under the plane tree [=Ph 1]. I emerged to find another bus rattling up from the opposite direction. It stopped, and among the passengers I spied the American lady I'd noticed as I got off the bus for the cave of Eileithuia three days earlier. She saw me and came over to ask me where I came from. California. Where? Near Los Angeles—Pasadena. "So am I!" she exclaimed. "What's your name?" I told her. "I'm Priscilla Batey, and I know your parents," she said. "They told me to keep an eye out for you—they worry about you!" What the context of knowing my parents was, I missed: I was in mild shock and just then my bus driver started honking his horn to collect his chicks and leave. So that was that. I trust she will presently report that I'm alive and kicking.

As usual, I got into a conversation on the bus pretty soon. When we got to Hagios Nikolaos, the man I'd been chatting with wanted to find a hotel too; so we hunted together. But not a room was to be had in any known hotel. I was so tired and discouraged that I decided to return to Iraklion where I knew I could have a bed, in Dee's room. So I rushed back to the station and caught the same bus, which was just leaving after a half-hour lay-over.

Elli was very surprised to see me drag in. She was still expecting Dee, who was late getting back from Athens. I explained what had happened and told her about the honey, and that I wanted to taste it. I also hadn't had any supper and was too tired to go off to a restaurant. She said the baker across the street should be just finishing his first baking for the next day, and she sent her little brother over to get a loaf of totally fresh bread. It was still hot from the oven. Elli and I sat down together at the kitchen table, cut the big round loaf in half, and ate hot bread and honey. The honey was indeed delicious. She ate only a little—she said she was on a diet—but claimed it was some of the best honey she'd ever tasted. I proceeded, morsel by morsel, to work my way through the entire half loaf, which tasted as good as the honey, the best bread I've had anywhere in Greece, while Elli egged me on because she thought I was too thin. A truly memorable evening.

Presently Elli's friend Natassa came, so we decided to go out and sit together in the square. I was flattered to go with them, and they expressed great pleasure that I was willing to come with them—they complained several times at the "same old routine" and "same old faces". Yet they never seemed to try reading good books to alleviate their boredom. I often wonder

if Greeks ever read after they finish school. There are bookstores, and books aren't expensive here, being paperbound like the French ones. But I never see anyone reading, unless it's a newspaper or slick magazine. They spend their time in cafés staring at people strolling in the street. But they never seem to sit in a park and read; they never carry books in their hands. They read on the train, but it's newspapers and picture-magazines. I did, however, see one museum guard slitting the pages of a book, a necessary preamble to reading it.

Just as we were leaving, Dee walked in. We were to have met up in Hagios Nikolaos the next morning, but she told me her friend Phil had agreed to drive us to Mokhlos, so we wouldn't have to take the bus. And I said, good, because I now knew the bus schedules were such that we couldn't do it by bus. She went upstairs and I went on out with my two Greek friends. They inquired if I'd rather stay there with Dee, but I assured them no, which was the truth. This was a chance I'd never get again.

The evening was just like the previous one I'd spent with them—they were right about that. Again, with their men-friends, the question of languages and accents came up. They thought it was very unusual for an American to speak four languages. I tried to explain that most of my friends spoke two or three, but that in most parts of America you can't get much practice because, at least in the middle of the country, you'd have to go a thousand miles in any direction to find native speakers of anything other than English. I was also thinking that people like Miss Lang aren't generally found sitting in a square in Iraklion watching the passers-by—they are busy studying, so you don't run into them.

¶

Mokhlos

I had thought that Dee and I would set out early the next morning, get there noon-ish, see Mokhlos, and get back in the evening. Phil had other ideas. Phil was one of Dee's many conquests. Dee is petite with an enormous shock of very long blonde hair which she piles on top of her head. She said to me once, back at Bryn Mawr, that all you had to do to wrap a guy around your little finger was, at some small provocation, to "dissolve in a shower of bobbypins." She must have dissolved in front of Phil.

He, it seems, was busy stocking his car with American food at the PX and was to arrive about noon. So I went off to the museum for a good two hours while Dee got ready. We were now to "stay all night somewhere and come back in the morning," so I gave her my medicine kit and nightgown to

put in with her stuff. We finally got off about 12:30 and stopped for lunch about 1:00 under an olive tree. Out of the back of the car came first mats and blankets to recline on; then an ice-locker full of ice, cokes, beer, etc. Next a large bag with bread, cookies, luncheon meat, cheese, and sandwich spread, and another bag with napkins, a knife, and other minor utensils. A veritable American feast—none of this “When in Rome, do as the Romans do.”

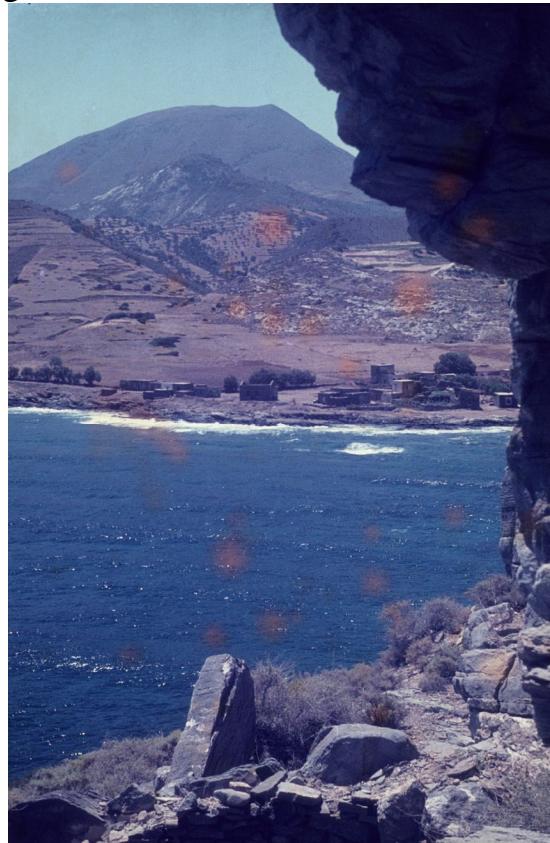
At 3:00 we were still sitting there (I was getting impatient, but archaeology meant nothing to Phil), when a motor scooter screeched to a halt beside us and a Greek guy climbed off, having recognized Phil. They conversed in pidgin English/Greek, and Phil asked him if he wanted to come along on our expedition. He did. So he scootered off to leave his bike home at a nearby village, and we, after picking up all the stuff, eventually followed and picked him up. It was 5:00 when we limped into Hagios Nikolaos—and promptly stopped for an ice cream break. (I ate nothing.) We stopped in Gournia about 6:30 so they could swim; but it was too rocky to swim, so we finally went on over the ridge to sandy Pachyammos. By now it was sunset, however, so only Dee went in; it was too cold for the boys. When Dee got out, it was dark; so we ate supper right there by the car—they inside, I outside enjoying the stars in relative solitude. Phil wanted to stay there all night, with all four of us sleeping in the station wagon. But I said “nothing doing!” to Dee, after drawing her aside to the “ladies’ rest station”. She agreed, so we went back ready to argue; but Phil had just decided on his own that there wasn’t room, so we agreed to drive back 5 km to Gournia where the guys could sleep on the porch of the unfinished tourist pavilion. So we spent the night at Gournia. (I wonder how many archaeologists now can claim that?)

Dee and I had been lying on our mat in the (locked) stationwagon for two or three minutes when I began to itch. I scratched, and lay down again. Then I heard Dee scratching. Then I had to scratch—it was mostly my bare arms, occasionally a leg. (We were sleeping in our ordinary clothes.) Finally I sat up, disgusted—and the itching stopped. As I lay down again, I realized Dee was still awake, scratching. So I sat up and asked her if she was feeling bitten, which she was. I suggested that the mats had picked up tiny grass-bugs at lunchtime and suggested that we spread the clean blanket over the mats and lie on that, since it was much too hot to need the blanket as a cover. So we did, and immediately found quiet, scratchless repose. Dee later confessed she thought there must be lice in the mat, although she could find neither bug nor bite after each “prick”; but she hadn’t wanted to say

anything to me because she was feeling slightly apologetic at the way the trip was developing.

About 6:30 the boys hallooed to wake us up: it seems they were tired of swatting mosquitoes. So we packed the car and returned to Pachyammos for breakfast, then—finally—drove on around the mountain and down a long steep ridge to Mokhlos. Or rather, to the tiny village on the shore opposite the tiny island of Mokhlos. We found a bit of beach over to the side where we could park the car, then returned to the tiny waterfront and its tiny dock to find someone who could row us across the narrow channel to the island with its Early Minoan tombs and other archaeological treasures. Or at least, that's what I was thinking about. Phil was busy getting the food, the mats, the blankets, and so on out of the car.

The entire little village, of course, was aware of our presence. You didn't often see a big American car down here. Immediately we had the offer of a rowboat, packed it up, crossed to the little quai on the island opposite, and unloaded. We were to halloo across the channel when we were ready to be fetched back—someone would be out and about and hear us. Not to be held back any longer, I started up the steep and narrow path to the left, where the early tombs had been found: a tall cliff above me and a sheer drop into gorgeous blue water below me. [Ph 28]



After a very long while, I decided I'd better go back and find my companions, who had not followed. The Greek lad was napping under almost the only tree, and I finally found Dee and Phil, simultaneously sunbathing and cuddling, on a beach mat half hidden among the tall weeds. So much for archaeology. But at least we had managed to *get* to beautiful little Mokhlos.

The next day I flew back to Athens.

¶¶¶

IV. The North

'επι γαρ Ζενς ἤρτνε πημα κακοιο (Od. 3.152)

For Zeus was crafting a suffering of evil.

August 1. I was sure surprised to hear “America calling!” yesterday, when they called me to the phone at the Xenias Melathron! Thank you—I really enjoyed hearing your voices! But wasn’t it dreadfully expensive? What time was it there? It was a little before 9 AM on Ann’s birthday here, but I calculate it was a bit before midnight on Mama’s birthday there. I’m looking forward to seeing you in Munich in six weeks. As I said, I have to leave Greece before that because my three months of allowed stay here expire several days before that. So I’ve booked my flight to Vienna (how I love that city!) and will take the train from there to meet you.

As I said, I’m now going to spend a few days cleaning up from Crete and reorganizing, then head north. I expect to reach Salonika August 9th; you can use Betsey A.’s mother’s address there. The American School session is about to break up, so that address won’t work. They have been so nice to me, even though I’m not enrolled. The inner corner of my eye got swollen, so, fearing an eye infection, I went over to the School and asked if they could recommend a doctor—they even called and got me the appointment. The doctor said I had gotten some lotion into a little gland there and that it would take care of itself (if I didn’t do that again). It is indeed recovering. A doctor’s office here looks entirely different from one at home—just a capacious ordinary room with a desk and some equipment, no little examination rooms that are all white formica and chrome.

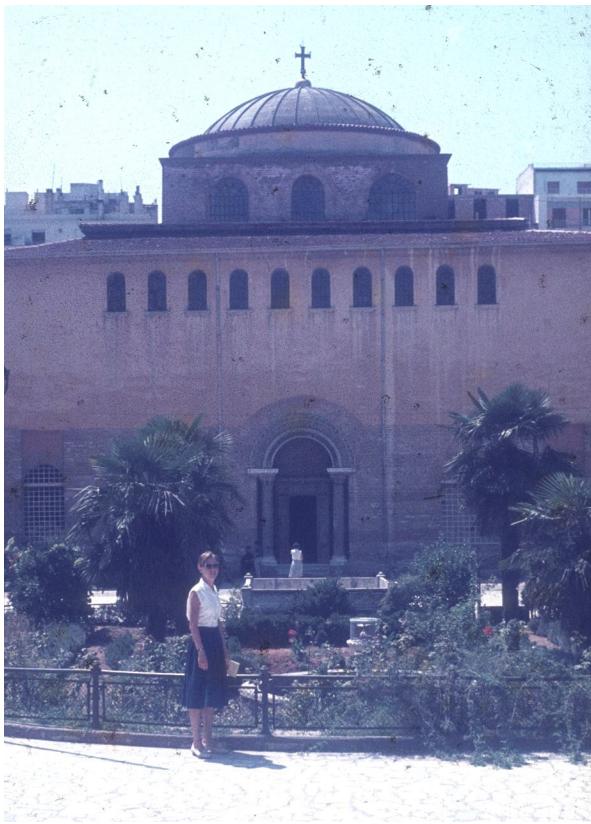
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Thessaly and Thessaloniki

Early August. I took the train rather than the bus north, first to Larissa and Volos, on a little bay just north of the island of Euboia. I went to the museum to see all the prehistoric stuff, but it was not possible to get to the actual sites. So I headed north again. After crossing the great plain of Thessaly, the train has to go along the coast to get around the flank of Mt. Olympos. The trip was beautiful: lovely groves of tall aspen-like trees shimmering greenly in the breeze on one side, the blue Aegean on the other.

The famous Vale of Tempe. It was the first I had seen of “temperate” trees—farther south it’s dark gnarly olives and figs and plane trees. I could never catch a glimpse of the top of Olympos, however—it was always veiled in clouds. I guess Zeus likes his privacy.

Salonika—Thessaloniki—struck me as heavily Byzantine (where it isn’t blocky concrete). Betsey took me to Hagia Sophia—not, of course, the one in Istanbul, but a small one the dome of which she says imitates the dome in Istanbul. Unfortunately it’s not much more than an empty shell now. [Ph 29]



Otherwise we didn’t do much. It’s quite hot, though not so bad as in Athens. We chatted and read and argued and listened to *Aïda*, her favorite music. And I seemed to acquire a lot of mosquito bites.

Betsey’s mother got sick, so I pushed on, to get out of their way. I returned south to Thessaly, this time by bus. Then I worked my way across Thessaly westwards toward the other coast, aiming first for Metéora, a famous series of monasteries at the northwest corner of Thessaly. I say “worked” because it was impossible to get any information about buses farther on—only for buses that actually left from “here”, wherever “here” was. I just had to trust that, since Greeks don’t generally have private cars,

they have to get to their towns and villages by public bus, so there will be a bus even if it doesn't run very often.

The typical inter-village bus trip usually starts from a small square in which one or more buses can park. Nearby there is a storefront sort of place where one can buy a ticket and see the schedule of buses that leave from there. You wait in a rather jumbly queue for the bus to open its doors and you climb on. People generally recognize me right away as a *xeni* (foreigner), especially once I open my mouth. First of all, I'm ξανθή “blonde”—which is to say my medium-brown hair is a lot lighter in color than theirs. (Menelaos was *xanthós* too!) Second, I dress funny—although as the summer wears on I have managed to look more and more Greek, what with the sandals I bought and the hat Miss Lang gave me; and it helps if I wear a nondescript top and a skirt rather than a one-piece dress. I always felt pleased when someone spoke to me as though they assumed I was Greek; and very occasionally I even managed to *answer* without breaking the illusion! That made me feel really triumphant.

Because I was *xeni*, they felt I should sit in the front of the bus where I could see out the front window. That was very nice of them, but the fact was I didn't *want* to sit where I could see up ahead—and see all the near-accidents! It's not that the drivers were so bad, it was that the moment they started up the bus, they turned on a tape of Greek folk music and turned it up so loud that they couldn't possibly hear anyone else's horn. That was OK on the flatlands, but the roads were mostly only one lane wide. So as we moved up into the hills and mountains, not hearing who was coming became a real problem. At least to me: no one else seemed to notice. So I preferred to hide near the back of the bus where I couldn't see what was coming—I couldn't do anything about it anyway.

Back there it was another world. The fuss about where I would sit would put people on notice that I spoke some Greek, and after a polite pause as the bus got going, they would usually soon begin to question me for a while, terribly curious about me and about America. Often they had relatives in America, usually in Chicago it seemed. It was a wonderful way to practice my Greek, both understanding and speaking. When the conversation would subside, I would look out the nearest side-window, with my dictionary or phrase-book open on my lap, memorizing words and watching the scenery go by (something I've always loved to do). Because the roads were all dirt roads and the bus stopped at most of the villages, the trips were very long and slow. So there was plenty of time to relax (although sleep was impossible with all that bumping). One of the things I noticed up north was patches of hills with rows and rows of tiny trees, or

rows of bigger trees. I was given to understand that cohorts of young people worked each summer—volunteers, I think—to reforest the north. This, of course, will help hold water in the soil and change the microclimate, presumably for the better. Greece is as dry as Southern California. Where it hasn't been reforested, it's mainly pasture land.

¶

Μετέωρα / Meteora,
literally “way up in the middle of the air”

At the town of Tríkala, I caught the mid-afternoon bus to the village of Kalambáka, right at the foot of the Metéora valley, in order to get a bus from there up to the monasteries above. At Kalambaka, as soon as we last few passengers had got off and a couple villagers had got on, the bus lumbered off back to Trikala. I stepped over to the little kiosk that served as bus station to see when the Meteora bus ran, but could find only the Trikala schedule. A woman probably in her late 20s (it's hard for me to tell the village women's ages—they all look either old or very young to me) asked me if she could help me; she was spinning wool and had a little girl with her.

[Ph 30]



Who was I meeting? I wasn't meeting anyone—I wanted to catch the bus to Meteora.

“The bus doesn't go there,” she said.

But, I objected, how could it not? How could people get there if there wasn't a bus? She looked at me dismayed—for indeed there was no bus.

She invited me to sit down in her chair (it turned out that she tended the little bus kiosk as needed) while we considered what was to be done.

In answer to my question, she replied that most tourists who came to see Meteora had their own car, and that otherwise people walked. I don't know how high the monasteries are on their pinnacles above the valley floor, but clearly many hundreds of feet up. It was a daunting prospect. I could consider starting up in the morning, but it was now late in the afternoon, and where could I stay the night? The village was too small to have a hotel or even a restaurant, although it had the usual *kapheneion*—a little café, the local casbah, that served Greek coffee, yogurt, limonada, and ouzo, mostly to men.

My new friend had a bright idea. How about if I rode up on the family donkey? Her brother had it out in the fields, but he would be back in about an hour and could take me on the donkey up to the very first edifice of Meteora, which happened to be a nunnery. There was only one nun left, she said; the others had died; but women could stay there with her for a very small price, and I could eat a simple supper there too. It would take maybe half an hour to get up there. Would there be room for me, I queried. (There was no point in even asking if one could phone ahead, of course.) Yes, there was always room.

There seemed no other choices, and that was a unique prospect, so I agreed.

This whole while, her hands were busy spinning a big puff of white wool into yarn. Mama taught us to weave, but I had never learned to spin (although I had bought that 19th-century spinning wheel at the Strasbourg flea-market); so I was fascinated and began to ask her how she did it. She showed me the process, then reached the spindle over into my hand, tucked the distaff into my belt, and encouraged me to try. Fortunately I had on a dress with a belt: with the distaff thus anchored, you can tug against it as you pull the stream of fibers out of the mass of wool with one hand, and you have the other hand free to keep the spindle twirling.

That's the theory, anyhow. Of course I was no good at it: my thread was very uneven and kept breaking. I hoped I wasn't ruining her skein of yarn. Her little daughter (maybe ten years old) laughed as she watched me struggle, and pretty soon it seemed like half the village was watching and chuckling. I took a picture of her spinning and they took a picture of me trying. [Ph 31]

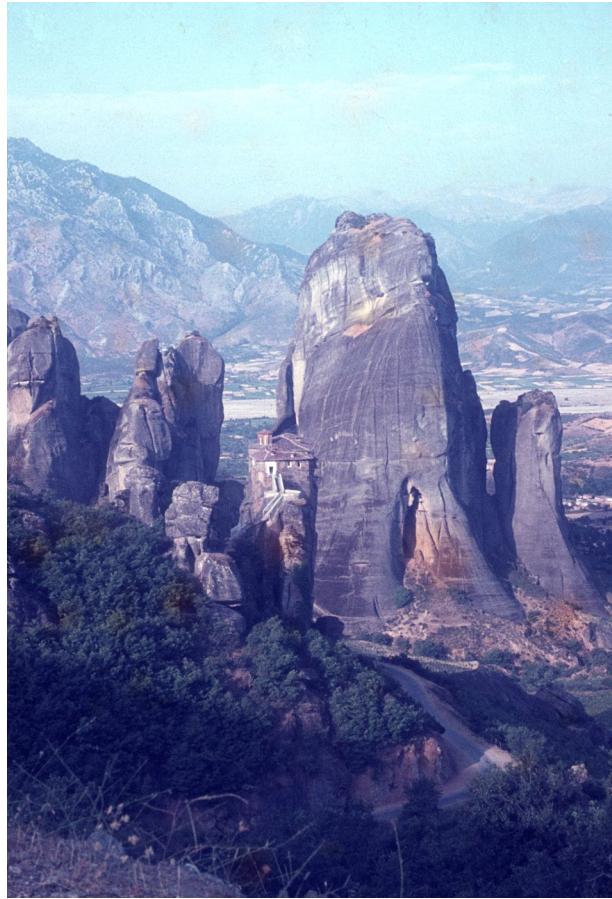


We had a grand time until finally she figured the hour had come to send her daughter off to find the brother and the donkey. He seemed like a nice young man. We settled on a price for the ride up to the nunnery, they loaded me and my little carpet-bag up onto the wooden saddle, side-saddle of course, and off we went, bump bump bump.

It was a remarkable ride, winding slowly up through the tree-filled valley at the base of smooth, grey, vertical-sided cliffs with sudden outcroppings of crags that looked like vertically elongated plug-domes. It was well after sunset where we were, yet the tops of the crags with their Byzantine chapels, sitting like little caps on stone mushroom-stems, were still in full daylight. Some were clearly ruins, others seemed in good enough shape to be inhabited.

We chatted some, though it was difficult to hear since he had to lead the donkey where it was narrow. Our shortcut from the village finally brought us around the first tall rock-pillars and out onto the dirt roadway that the tourists use to drive up there. My guide pointed out some buildings atop a stone stem to my right, quite high up yet not even half so high as the sheer stone face behind us.

“Rossánou!” he said. The name of my destination. The little path wound up and up, around the convent, until I found we were crossing a small bridge from the side of the cliff over to the entrance of the building.
[Ph 32]



He helped me down, then dashed in to tell the nun he had brought her another guest. They came out together. The young man turned his animal around and started for home while she invited me in—through a small building, across a little courtyard, and into another building.

The nun was possibly in her 50s, her clothing plain and practical and her head covered by a small wimple. She was not alone: two other women were staying there, aged maybe 25 and 50. All three looked sturdy. The nun was taciturn; the guests were bustling with curiosity. It was suggested that I be given a chance to rest for a bit, until supper, and the nun led me to my room, showing me along the way where the door to the toilet was.

My room was large and airy—in fact, it felt downright empty. Perhaps it had once been a dormitory. Along one wall was a row of windows, formed of multiple panes set in wooden frames, facing out across the darkening valley. There were no curtains; but then, who needed them when there were no neighbors up here? A thick straw pallet covered with blankets on top of a long, low, built-in bench just beneath the windows served as bed; a washstand and simple armless chair completed the furnishings.

I set my bag down and went back out to the “rest room”—it had been many long hours since the last chance. Opening the little door, I braced myself for the smell. But there was none. No plumbing either, not even a pitcher of water. Just a bench with a couple of holes, like the old two-seater outhouses in Idaho. I latched the door and stepped over to the seat. As I looked down at it, the secret was revealed: I was looking straight down through empty air at least 300 feet!



Mirum spargens sonum

During a supper of bread, cheese, yogurt, and honey, the two guests began their flood of questions: what was my name, where was I from, why was I here, and so on. We talked the best we could with my still-limited Greek, but it largely sufficed now for simple topics. The sister added only an occasional word to the chatter. When I said I wanted to see what I could of the monasteries the next day, they said that they had intended to do the same and would I be interested in going with them? We could all walk around the top of the valley together; they knew the way. I couldn’t have asked for anything better, and they seemed delighted that I wanted their company.

I was curious about them, too. I gathered they were both married and both here for “rest cures”—for $\tau\alpha\ \nu\epsilon\nu\alpha$ “the nerves”, as they would say, always accompanied by a characteristic gesture with a half-closed hand strumming up and down across the heart. Reading between the lines, I pieced together that they were both in abusive marriages (which might be the fault of the live-in in-laws as much as of the husbands) and had reached the point of nervous breakdown. A nunnery provided a socially acceptable place to get away; the families, patriarchal to the core, didn’t have to worry about any hanky-panky with other men here. And the complete isolation undoubtedly made “restful” verge into “boring”. I think they were delighted *most* of all at the novelty of a wide-eyed American girl to relieve some of that boredom.

We retired to bed early—there was nothing else to do. The straw pallet was a lot more comfortable than I would have thought, though disconcertingly crunchy when you try to turn over. I fell asleep watching the stars through the windows by my shoulder.

I awoke suddenly to a very strange sound, reverberating through the valley, drumming in my ears. I opened my eyes and looked out. It was much too dark to read my watch, but I could see just the very beginnings of

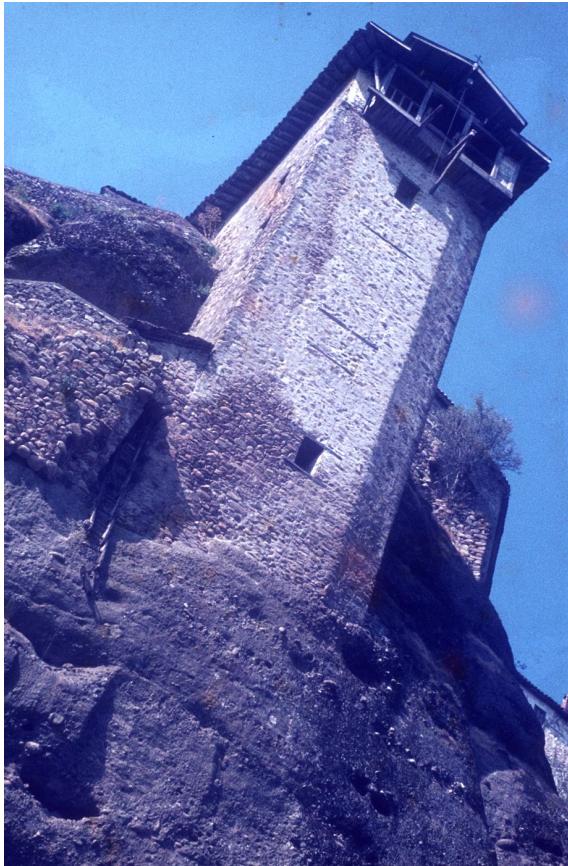
dawn light. What was that sound? I've never heard anything like it: it didn't sound like any drum I knew of. It had an oddly familiar timbre with some higher overtones, sort of like wood-blocks, and yet that wasn't right either. Nor could I call its rhythms musical, for they seemed to have no units, no repetitions (and I'm quite accustomed to "uneven" Balkan dance rhythms); yet the sound kept coming, rolling through the valley, occasionally dying away for a moment, then starting again. I sat up and concentrated on the barely discernible view before me; but there was no hope of identifying the source of the sound because of the multitude of echoes from all those walls of live rock that make the valley so unique. I gave up trying to understand and lay back down to just listen to the bewitching cascade of percussion; I would ask my new friends in the morning. Presently it stopped and I fell asleep.

¶

Varlaam

At breakfast I tried asking: Had they heard the mysterious pounding in the early morning? Yes? So what was it? They tripped all over themselves trying to explain, then finally looked at each other and said it would be easier to show me when we reached the place it came from, later in the morning.

We set out into the bright early sunshine. We crossed the little bridge, wound down the back path to the roadway below, and started up the valley. We were near the bottom on the right, and our quarry was the Varlaam Monastery, high above on a fat pinnacle across from us on the left—I had noticed it from my bedroom window. I gathered (as we walked up the valley to its head and swung around onto the lefthand spur) that Varlaam is the biggest and oldest monastery there, begun in the 14th century, with many additions and remodelings after that. It seems that, although the founding monk, Varlaam, had somehow to climb the sheer sandstone pillar on his own, the monks had later built a winch so they could haul people up to the top in a basket. The women giggled at my look of dismay at the prospect of being winched up hundreds of feet in a swinging basket. No, no, they said, we can walk up—the Germans blasted a staircase in the rock so that people couldn't hide from them up there. So, basket it was until 20 years ago; but we walked, looking up from time to time at the rope-net sling dangling from the tower above us. It is truly a long way up, and without stairs it had been truly defensible. [Ph 33]



At the top, we entered a large courtyard heavily shaded by a thick growth of grapevines trellised out over the entire area between the center and two wings of the main building. The shade felt good. A monk who served as guide immediately accosted us (and the others who were straggling up the stairs) to whisk us off to the main chapel on the right. But before he could scoop us up, my companions stopped me at the enormous oaken table that filled the middle of the courtyard. Here, they said, *here* is your noise! And one of them knocked on the table alternately with her two fists. That was indeed the sound—only much fainter. What I pieced together from their torrent of Greek was that the monks in the different monasteries traditionally communicated with each other this way, rapping out their messages especially in the quiet of the dawn. What kinds of messages I know not: I'd have to guess—since the valley was not under attack and the weather is steadily hot and dry—that what I heard was the call to matins. Nor have I any inkling of the encoding system. But I could now see that the sound was amplified by the amphitheater-like horseshoe of buildings around the courtyard, with the open side debouching over the entire valley.

I will never forget that torrent of sound pouring through the dark.



Hagios Stephanos

I was so blown away by the monster table and its mysteries that I didn't concentrate on the volley of Greek from the guide enough to comprehend the rest of the tour. The chapel was painted with early icons: my impression is of mostly black backgrounds from which haloed Byzantine faces peered through the soot, the latter provided aplenty by guttering candles of all thicknesses. Seeing the monks' great wooden winch from the top side reinforced my relief at being able to use the stairs once again to go down.

From Varlaam we walked back toward the head of the valley. Down in a side-gully near us was a sheepfold with an apsidal plan right out of the Neolithic. The shepherds had made some sort of wattle palisade the shape of a hairpin, with a straight wall across the open end. Then they had roofed it with grass thatch that slanted in toward a small open, courtyard-like, central area. The shepherds also had a hut here, part of the roof thatch, part shingle, and part a sheet of tin. **[Ph 34]**



As the road turned right to descend, we took the left fork so as to visit a second monastery, as proposed by my companions. (Was I too tired? Not at all! I was quite used to long walks by this point in my trip, and I suspected the women were farm villagers, not townies.) I soon realized that we were no longer looking up at pinnacles but were traversing the edge of a

high plateau. We paused in some shade to eat the bread and cheese with which our nun had provided us. [Ph 35]



Presently we came to Hagios Stephanos. [Ph 36]



It too sits atop a crag and is entered via a little bridge, but since the bridge spans over from the edge of the plateau, one doesn't become so aware of the drop-off until one looks through windows on the other side, where the view over the valley of Thessaly is breathtaking. I remember small cells, catwalk-like balconies of brown timbers, with priests in tall black cylindrical hats and long swinging robes striding about. [Ph 37]



But I particularly recall the chapel, bright with windows and a cupola in a high ceiling, and all the paintings dominantly red and gold. We sat there for quite a while, just taking it all in, until a service began. I gather that they have been restoring the monastery, that it suffered much during the war.

By the time we finished visiting Hag. Stephanos, it was mid-afternoon and very hot. There are other monasteries, but my two friends said these were the best, so we headed back to Rossanou tired and satisfied. I needed to continue west to Ioannina the next day.

Unfortunately, the next morning I woke up with my innards in turmoil once again. I packed my little bag, paid the sister, said goodbye to everyone, and staggered down to the road, feeling awful and wondering how long it would take me to get down to the village and its bus kiosk. The road was much longer than the shortcut we had taken with the donkey, but I had no idea how to retrace that path.

Then I did something I've never done before. I heard a car coming down the road, so I stepped aside and waved it down. I was in luck. It was a tiny little Citroen driven by a nice young French couple. I told them in French that I wasn't feeling very well, and would they by any chance be willing to give me a ride down to the next little village where I could catch a bus. They immediately took pity on me. The young woman hopped out and helped me squeeze myself and my little bag into the pint-sized back seat, and off we went as the young man declared with a grin, "Avec l'auto, c'est vite fait!" [With a car, it's quickly done!] In fact, it was so *vite* that I had time, before the bus came, to order and eat some *lapas* (that local cure for diarrhea I mentioned: rice cooked with a bit too much water but no salt, and a little squeeze of lemon for taste).

¶

Metsovo

Returning to Trikkala for a day, I caught a bus on west into the mountains, through Metsovo, all the way to Ioannina, fabled lair of the tyrannical Ali Pasha. I climbed aboard, found a free seat by a window in the left rear, and settled in with my phrasebook in my lap for a long ride. The current Athenian hit song, *Kyr' Andonis* ("Mr. Anthony"), was blaring through the bus's speaker system, and people were chattering, dancing with their hands, soothing their chickens, or snoozing. I never could fathom how anyone could snooze on a Greek bus! (Hand-dancing is a very Greek thing to do: when there isn't room to dance, but the music calls you to do so, you tuck your elbows in and wave your hands—very artistically—in time to the music.)

Up, up we wound, ever higher into the Pindos Mountains, the mountains of Épiros, home of the shepherds. I simply watched it go by, half of it steeply above us to the right, the other half steeply below us to the left. I just prayed we wouldn't meet another bus around a blind curve, for the dirt road was basically one lane wide. The driver would dutifully honk his horn as he approached many of the blind turns; but how he could possibly hear an approaching driver's honk above the din of the folk music I could not see.

Some hours later we pulled into Métsovo, a picturesque village perched on the side of a mountain. The village square formed the only wide spot: a large flat terrace with a stone or cement retaining wall on the downhill side, but no parapet. Sitting coolly on the edge of the pavement where it overlooked the gorge was a small owl, grey-brown as the dust around it. It's only the second owl I'd seen in nearly two months, and I began to understand why they are so hard to spot! They blend perfectly into the background.

Half an hour, cries the bus driver as he jumps out. While my fellow passengers swarm the café for beverages or gather their bundles and trudge off to their houses, I see that the local women have laid out their weavings for any spenders who might be aboard. I'm hooked. I pass the time looking carefully through everything; this seems to be the source of the type of Byzantine design found on the bag and rug I had bought.

Then I hear a strange, somewhat monotone yet musical sound coming from the interior of a small café. A few people are standing at the door looking in, so I sidle up to see what's happening. Inside, an old, old man with a large, drooping, grey-white mustache and shaggy eyebrows sits in the semi-dark, his eyes half shut, sawing away on a small mandolin-shaped

instrument with only one or two strings, and intoning words. I suddenly realize I'm watching the recitation of some sort of epic accompanied on a *gusle*—straight out of Homeric times, straight out of Milman Parry's work on the Balkan epic tradition.

Soon the bus horn brought us back to the present.



Ioannina and Dodona

It was late afternoon when we reached Ioannina. Directly in front of the bus door was a policeman sitting at a card-table with a big notebook and other papers. What was this? By the time I descended from the bus there was a considerable crowd of passengers around his table. Seeing my hesitation and puzzlement, one of the women I had chatted with on the bus explained to me that the great annual drama festival at Dodona was on, so the town was full of visitors and the hotels were full. So the police department was billeting people on private houses for places to stay. The households with extra rooms were on his lists, the prices pre-set by the tourist police. And they were cheap, compared to a hotel. (The Greeks are incredibly efficient and practical about things like this.) When it came my turn, amid the chatter of explanations about me by my fellow-passengers, the very business-like policeman handed me a name, address, little map, and price in exchange for looking at my passport and writing down my name. (As I recall, I paid *him* for the first night—proof of solvency, I guess. I'm sure the money reached the householders, perhaps with a tax taken out) The others crowded around me and pointed to the far side of the square and up the hill as the direction in which I should walk. Enquiries about the Dodona festival brought the information that at sunset buses would be ferrying all the visitors to the ancient amphitheater for the evening's performance.

I hurried off to find my quarters so as to be back in time. In answer to my knock, a woman in her thirties, dressed in simple village dress, opened the door. I showed her my slip from the policeman and she welcomed me in, totally amazed to find she was hosting an American. I suspect that my long skinny room was normally the front parlor, slightly rearranged to accommodate a guest and earn some much-needed cash. It was right at the front of the house, to the left off of a long hall that ran from the front door to the large kitchen at the back. Two other small rooms opened to the left, in one of which another lady—a friend of hers—sat embroidering. A second embroidery sat on the table where my hostess had set it at my knocking. Just before the kitchen door, another door on the right hid the toilet, which

consisted of a square of white porcelain with two little footprint-shaped, corrugated platforms on either side and a drain-hole in the middle. It could be flushed by pouring water into it from a huge metal pitcher. The door was kept shut with good reason. (I had encountered such toilets before in the villages, but this one I got to know all too well. Their drains apparently do not have a "trap".) After some polite chatter, I dumped my stuff, cleaned up a bit, grabbed my sweater (for later), and headed back to the square to catch one of the buses to Zeus's sanctuary at Dodona.

So many people had got to the square before me that there were no empty buses left, but the tourist police were ready for this contingency too. They had requisitioned all the sheep-trucks they could get—large pick-up trucks with a high fence of horizontal wooden slats all around the bed. I was loaded into one of these, and we stood crowded together, holding on if we could, swaying as a unit as the truck lumbered off up the road. The nicely dressed Greek girl in front of me was wearing those fashionable but utterly impractical white spike-heeled sandals that I had mentioned noticing at the Acropolis, and inevitably, during a particularly violent lurch of the bus, she lost her already precarious balance and stepped back—squarely onto my flat-sandaled foot. I let out a shriek of extreme pain (the poundage per square centimeter must be terrific), and people made a little space for me so I could crouch and tend to my heavily bleeding foot. They were completely amazed, however, when I whipped out of my purse an alcohol wipe, cleaned up my foot, then pulled a large bandage from the same source and stuck it on as tightly as I could. All this in a lurching sheep-truck under constant danger from another spike-heel attack—although, in all fairness, the fashionable young woman was hanging on tighter now.

I didn't get much of a notion of Dodona, except that we had driven up into the hills quite a ways to get there, then walked through large groves of trees in the dusk to reach the amphitheater. Dodona was famous in ancient times for its dove-filled grove of oak trees that breathed and sighed the answers to mortals' questions—the great oracle of Dodona. The amphitheater was so full by the time we got there that we were ushered to the very top. That meant we were so far from the actors that there was no hope of lip-reading; plus it was a tragedy I had never read in Greek. I confess I understood nothing. A few rows below me, however, sitting on one of the backless stone benches was a woman in full folk-dress. I managed to get a picture of her (her back, of course) before it got too dark to do so. (I don't have a flash—too heavy to carry for too little use, since you can't use flash in the museums.) It was the only full costume I've seen, although one of the young women in the plaza at Metsovo was wearing

clothing that was part store-bought and part home-woven folk costume. I guess that's how the costumes die out.

¶

Unul nașt și altrul moare...

Lumen, soare lumen! —Romanian folksong

(“One is born and another dies... World, Sister World!”)

The next morning I got up bright and early to go out sight-seeing in Ioannina. The city lies in a bowl-shaped valley, beside a good-sized lake in the bottom of the bowl. Because of this bowl, Ioannina is especially hot and sultry, with no wind. It was from here that Ali Pasha centered his reign of terror over northwestern Greece. I was told a story of a beautiful Greek girl who dared to wear a silk scarf, a luxury forbidden to the Turkish despot's subjects. When this infraction was reported to Ali Pasha, he said he wished to see this beauty and invited her and her 17 girlfriends to his palace—and drowned them all in the lake in the manner of adulteresses. However that may be, there certainly was a lot of bloody guerilla warfare among the Greeks and Turks and Albanians, etc., in this area. (There's an innocuous-sounding song with a rather pretty tune to which we learned a dance called “Ali Pasha” [but this turns out to concern an entirely different Pasha who lived in eastern Turkey].)

When I emerged from my room, my hostess told me that she had cooked me some breakfast and invited me into the kitchen, where she seated me at the kitchen table and proudly served me up some bread and jam and two soft-boiled eggs which she pulled, still in their shells, out of the large kettle of soup she was making. She said she had gone out early to get the eggs so as to have something special to give her guest from America.

I was stuck. I hadn't thought much about my eggwhite allergy during the whole trip, and I certainly hadn't maintained my desensitizing routine of a single well-cooked egg every three to four days. Eggs were almost never on the menu, especially in the south of Greece, and the very hardest thing to notice is what isn't there. I wondered what would happen now if I ate them. Meanwhile she was cracking them onto my plate, and out they came, so undercooked that the whites were mostly runny and translucent. And she was standing proudly at my elbow.

Etiquette absolutely demanded that I eat them. The best I could manage was to eat the yolks and whitened part of the whites while trying to hide the translucent part amid the water and eggshells on my plate. Then I

hastily excused myself, with profuse thanks for the delicious breakfast, and fled into the city.

I recall wandering across the square and into the old coppersmith quarters, a whole narrow street lined with endless cubicles (like the ones in Siteia where I bought honey, only older and smaller). In the cubicles, on the cobbled sidewalk, and hung from all the walls inside and out were copper utensils of all sizes and descriptions, from great cauldrons to tiny long-handled flasks for making Greek coffee. By now I had come to like Greek coffee, although I don't do well with caffeine. It's the one kind of coffee that actually tastes like it smells! Coffee can smell so delicious, yet until Greece I found its taste entirely disappointing. So I peered at all the copper wares until I found just the little one-person coffee-maker I wanted, with lovely hammer-marks all over its copper sides and a thick wash of tin inside.

As I left this little street, I began noticing that my lower arms were itching. You itch, you scratch. But now wherever I scratched, my arms were swelling up in long puffy welts. This had never happened to me before. But I was pretty sure I knew what it came from. I now remembered the mysterious mosquito bites in Thessaloniki and realized I had eaten an omelet there. Hives. But that was one egg and thoroughly cooked; now I had ingested the larger part of two, and very undercooked. I was in serious trouble. I needed a doctor and antihistamines fast. What to do?

My hostess had introduced her husband as the anesthetist to the town surgeon, so I rushed "home". Fortunately the lady was there. I showed her my arms and told her I was having a bad allergic reaction (I didn't say to what), and asked if she could take me to a doctor. Of course—she would take me to her husband's clinic. We must hurry, she said, before they closed for lunch (3 hours long). We soon set off, down to the main square, then off to the right, walking walking walking for what seemed like a couple of miles in the sweltering midday heat. Finally we arrived. She told them what had happened—I think they wormed out of me that it was the eggs—and the doctor kindly prescribed some antihistamines. I gulped the first one down with no water, using our old trick from France of collecting enough saliva in my mouth to do the job, and we set out to walk back. I was feeling pretty faint by this time and the midday sun was getting hotter by the minute. Unfortunately my hostess, who had done so much to try to help me, kept meeting friends on the street, with each of whom she would stop to chat while I would lean against a cool house-wall trying not to keel over. By the time we got to the main square, I could walk no farther. Realizing now what bad shape I was in, she sat me down at a shady but empty café, in a canvas chair by the curb, saying she would go for a taxi to carry me home.

And then I blacked out.

No, I didn't lose consciousness, I blacked out. Everything became black and silent: I could neither see nor hear, nor even, I think, feel the wooden arms of the chair that I was last known to be clutching. But I knew that I had not yet keeled over.

I have no idea how long I sat there, but I know what I was thinking. I was thinking about the fact that I might well die here, in the middle of the most remote part of Greece, having never told anyone where I was going (since I was inventing my itinerary as I went along). What this would do to my poor parents was a terrible distress to me. But most distressing of all was the fact that this was the week that my dear sister was to have her baby—that I might never see her or her baby. That was the last straw. I was beside myself with grief: I realized in those moments that my family was dearer to me than anything else in the world, and that whatever stupid fights I had had with them over the years were just that: stupid. Worthless.

Suddenly a hand touched me and in that instant my vision and hearing returned. My hostess was shaking me by the shoulder and calling to me, "Elisabet! Elisabet!" while right in front of me, not more than a foot away, sat the taxi with its door open, the driver leaning over into the passenger seat to see us and jabbering away also at top voice. I had never even heard them drive up. Shaken in more ways than one, but strong enough now to move, I let her help me out of the chair into the taxi, and we drove the three remaining blocks to her house.

Apparently I had passed the crisis; I never again blacked out. But despite the antihistamines my arms and legs remained swollen—no worse but hardly better. I stayed close to bed for several days, writing in my journal (where I was way behind). I took it into my head that I probably shouldn't be eating anything even related to egg albumin, like milk albumin, so no yogurt or cheese; and I had diarrhea again, so I didn't want to eat roughage; and I had had just run out of pepsin pills that allowed me to eat meat, so I couldn't eat that. (I had more in Athens, but this side trip was taking far longer than I had expected.) So I was down to eating just rice. And not getting noticeably better. Apparently I must have attempted to go out sightseeing at least one day, because my roll of film contained a picture of Ali Pasha's palace on the island in the middle of the lake, taken from the prow of a small boat. But I remember nothing of it. **[Ph 38]**



After five days, I recalled having heard once that allergies “stack” and began to wonder if there was something else in that hot, dead air that I was allergic to. So I got up, washed, dressed, packed my little bag, and told my still apologetic hostess that I was feeling *much* better today (lie!), and that I really *must* get on with my journey because friends were expecting me back in Athens (lie!). She looked at me a bit dubiously, but gratefully received my payment for board and room and insisted on giving me as a keepsake a pair of small cross-stitched doilies she had made (and clearly used). She also insisted on helping me down to the bus station—she thought the bus for the coast left at noon. I was grateful for the help, although normally my bag did not seem heavy.

After she had left me there, I discovered that the bus actually did not leave for another two hours, so I sat down on a bench to wait. On the other side of a little latticed and vine-covered fence was a restaurant from which wafted the most delicious smell of roast lamb. After half an hour of this, I felt so starved that I decided to go in and have some, even though I would undoubtedly get sick for lack of pepsin pills. I ordered lamb steak *skára*—I’m not sure what the word itself means, but what it brings you is a divine lamb steak, medium rare, well sprinkled with oregano and grilled on an open fire. You squeeze a wedge of lemon over it as you eat. Plus bread. I devoured it all—to heck with the consequences. Then my bus came and I climbed aboard.

Once we had climbed out of that hot valley, it got progressively cooler and the air fresher. By the time we got to the Adriatic coast I really *was* feeling better. And I was having no ill effects from eating all that meat.

This has continued. For three years I've had to supplement the pepsin in my stomach, because the extreme stress of school had made my stomach stop functioning. But two and a half months of living on Greek time—what's the hurry??—slowed me down to the point of curing me.

At the harbor I got a ticket on the next ferry across to Corfu—Kerkyra in Greek. It was late afternoon. I stood at the prow on the upper deck with the full wind from the sea on my face, watching the passing shoreline of mysterious Albania shimmering barrenly in the heat haze, and by the time we got to Corfu I felt completely well again. Perhaps my hunch was right that something in the air at Ioannina was further poisoning me. I found a hotel right on the waterfront and, after dinner and a beautiful walk around the tree-lined waterfront square, I slept hard. I had returned from the dead. I would see my family again.

¶

Kerkyra / Corfu

Kerkyra/Corfu is very different from the rest of the Greece I have seen, because subject to strong Italian influence, the result of belonging to Venice for a long time. The costumes look much more Italian than Balkan, and the dances likewise. I was able to see a number of costumes in one of the local museums. Although I felt fine otherwise, I was still a bit weak, so I took one of the horse-carriages (kept at the waterfront for tourists) to a nearby Classical site and museum. The driver was still there when I came out, so I engaged him to take me back. Just as he finished helping me into the shay, a friend of his drove up and the two started chatting. (What's the hurry?) Suddenly, however, my coachman noticed that his friend's stallion was getting *very* visibly enamored of his own mare, and in great embarrassment because of the prim young lady who was his customer he abruptly cut short his conversation and off we trotted.

In a shop I overheard something to the effect that on a particular Saturday in Lent (I don't know the Church calendar well enough to know which—it might be the day before Easter) the people of Kerkyra throw clay pots out of their windows to smash in the street, as part of an ancient ritual.

From Kerkyra I took the boat down the coast, watching carefully for the little island called Thiaki, that is, Ithaca. It is quite small and, although in the right vicinity, does not seem to answer to Homer's description of the famed home of Odysseus. But I snapped a picture anyway as we passed. We sailed on south around the corner of Greece where Byron had his last

exploits and on into the gulf of Corinth, to Patras, one of Greece's main commercial ports.

I stayed over night, securing myself a ticket on the first bus back to Athens the next morning, then wandering around the city a bit. I needed to stock up again on my usual travel-fodder, a type of candy bar called *pasteli*, which is confected of toasted sesame seeds and honey. Yum. (In the villages I could get yogurt and little else, but yogurt plus pasteli makes a pretty satisfying meal.) So I was looking for the type of little kiosk that sells candy and cigarettes. I was particularly amused by the legend on the awning of the one I found, way off at one end of the waterfront; unfortunately it was too dark to take a picture. It said *in English* (and I copied it down exactly): "Have a real Greek cigarette—have an ETHNOS!"

Indeed.



Sounion

Late August. Back in Athens I cleaned up at the good old Xenias Melathron. It was nice to get back to my big suitcase, with other clothes to wear and replenished detergent to wash everything thoroughly. (There is no such thing as a laundromat here, of course: I have washed everything, all summer, in washbasins, rolled the clothes in my towel, and hung them about my room to dry on my inflatable plastic hangers.) Before washing clothes, though, I rushed down to get my mail, and was not disappointed.

Hooray!!! So "Thumper" is a boy! I'm so glad he's so cute and that Ann is so healthy! I ate a rum-chocolate pastry in celebration!

Then I began to scurry around to do everything I hadn't got to yet. This was my last chance.

I needed cash, so I zipped into the bank down at the corner, darted to the back and without thinking about it asked the cashier—the one who speaks English—in Greek if I could cash so-and-so many dollars in traveler's checks and exchange them for drachmas. He looked at me as he handed me a pen to sign the checks and said quietly in Greek, "It is so nice to have someone actually learn our language while staying here!" I had been speaking *nothing* but Greek for three weeks, in the northwest; it brought me up short. I realized I had indeed accomplished my goal of learning an appreciable amount of Modern Greek, in addition to visiting in person many of the archaeological sites, especially prehistoric ones, that we had studied.

But I still had some other little goals. I had just enough days left to have an Amalia costume made to my measurements down on Pandrossou

Street: a rich maroon velvet jacket decorated with gold braid and a matching soft pillbox cap with a very long gold silk tassel, plus a floor-length, slightly full sky-blue skirt. The skirts used to be silk; mine is merely polished cotton.

I also went to the record store and searched out an LP that had *Kyr' Andonis* on it. To me, it's the most appealing of the "current" songs that I heard so endlessly on the buses, but there's some other nice stuff on the record too.

Finally, I took a local bus out to Sounion, timing it (as everyone advised) to get there just before sunset. (Most people were Greeks trudging home from work, but by the end it was mostly down to tourists like me headed for Sounion.) The exquisite 5th-century BC Doric temple sits right out on the end of the Attic peninsula—I first saw it as we were steaming off to the island of Mykonos. It was the first thing ancient Athenian mariners saw of their homeland as they returned from a sea voyage. From the sea it looks like a tiny edifice of matchsticks; from land it looks quite large, though not so large as the Parthenon. The sun sinking in redness into the wine-dark sea behind the ruins is indeed magnificent, and a fitting goodbye. [Ph 39] Then back to the hotel to swelter through one last hot night spread-eagled on the bed; and finally my flight to Vienna, one day before my visa ran out.

